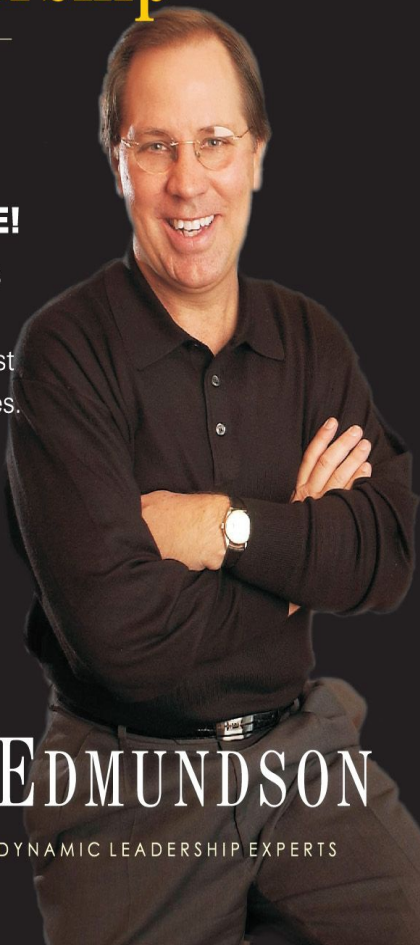


# Applied Leadership

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**PUTTING  
THEORY  
INTO  
PRACTICE!**

10 Of America's  
Top Experts  
Share Their Most  
Potent Strategies.



FEATURING

**KEN EDMUNDSON**

AND 9 OTHER DYNAMIC LEADERSHIP EXPERTS

# Applied Leadership

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## A MESSAGE FROM THE PUBLISHER

It would be difficult to find anyone to argue against the need for strong leadership in America and around the world. Everyday we read about a crisis in a state house or board room that is clearly linked to poor or even unethical leadership. What is difficult for many is explaining exactly what competent leadership looks like in the real world. We know it when we see it, but defining it often becomes an exercise in tired analogies and trite catch phrases.

Thankfully, there are people who *can* define leadership and can even teach leadership principles and skills in ways that make sense to the rest of us . We tend to categorize them as “leadership experts,” but in reality they are a diverse group of people who have not only proven themselves to be competent and even inspired leaders, but who have studied the art of leadership for years. Their passion is to help us understand what leadership really looks like in our office, around our dining room tables, and at our local civic clubs. These are the men and women we selected for this edition of *Applied Leadership*. So pull up a chair, grab your yellow highlighter, and be prepared to learn. After all, isn't that the first step toward becoming a great leader?

David E. Wright, President  
International Speakers Network



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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **From Coal To Diamonds: Mastering The Art of Leadership Under Pressure** *Richard E. Forgay II*

#### **LIFE LESSONS IN LEADERSHIP**

##### **Mastery Requires Daily Practice**

Coal in raw form is a crude carbon rock. When mined it's dirty, black, and dusty. When refined it begins to take on a rich luster. When it's ready to market its value and applications are abundant. When ignited and put to good use, it produces enough energy and power to change our world. When exposed to pressure for long periods of time, it transforms into the hardest and most valuable resource the world has ever known. Mastering the art of leadership is a similar process and the same potentials are available for each of us.

As a native son of the anthracite coal region of Northeast Pennsylvania, I learned the art of leadership from the deepest roots of our rich American history. It was there in the foothills of the majestic Pocono Mountains where many of our ancestors called home, working in the deep and dangerous coalmines with nothing more than a dream of making a meaningful difference in their lives and in the lives of those they served. The harsh realities of the coalmines, however, included survival, adaptation, change, and working together through adversity, conflict, and seemingly insurmountable odds. This was the perfect place to study and apply the art of leadership under pressure.

The people of the anthracite coal region are strong willed and resilient. They are known for possessing an extraordinary work ethic. The area is a melting pot of ethnic diversity where the inhabitants take great pride in their rich traditions and heritage. The Molly Maguires, an ethno-religious group formed to combat deplorable conditions of the coal mines, gave rise to the United Mine Workers Union in 1890. The Pennsylvania anthracite coal region, specifically Pottsville, was home to Yuengling, America's oldest brewery. The area is also host to the oldest continuously operating deep coal mine in America, now a popular attraction called the No. 9 Mine & Museum in Lansford, Pennsylvania. The area was also a home to many who have gone on to make a meaningful difference as leaders of great distinction.

The countless stories of success of the anthracite coal region are historic and legendary. I am forever proud and grateful for the lessons in leadership that have been passed on from our great ancestors. These foundational practices and principles of leading under pressure have never failed me, from my days in the gritty and dangerous blue-collar world to executive leadership in corporate America.

As the president and CEO of Success Partners, I've dedicated my life to the daily study, observation, teachings, and real world applications of high performance leadership. It is a practice, a passion, and a journey.

The most effective leaders among us never lose their youthful enthusiasm and energy. They possess patience, care, and wisdom to mentor other great leaders. The greater the pressure, the better they perform. They are the masters. True mastery requires daily practice and the ability to never rest on a title, position, or accomplishment.

It is my privilege and honor to share with you the real world adventures and applications of turning coal to diamonds by mastering the art of leadership under pressure.

### **APPLIED LEADERSHIP:**

1. How has my past helped to support what I do today?
2. Why would anyone be compelled to follow me as a leader?
3. Based on the lessons from my past, how can I commit to change the future?

### **ONE-MINUTE REFLECTIONS**

#### **Where Have You Been, Where Are You Going?**

Great leaders make time to think about where they have been and where they want to go. It's easy enough to overlook the fact that if you are leading others, they are boarding your train. As a private pilot, I believe it is generally not a good idea to hop into an aircraft and just "wing it," especially with precious cargo on board. As with mastering the art of leadership, we should really schedule time with ourselves every day to develop and communicate a compelling vision.

Several years ago, I had a wonderful opportunity to share the



podium with Mr. Fred Rogers at an awards luncheon in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Upon being introduced and reaching the podium, he visually scanned the room with sincere interest. Then he simply requested that everyone take just one minute to reflect upon the people who helped him or her to be successful.

The room was full of high power newspaper publishers, executives, award winning newspaper carriers, and their family members. After one minute of complete silence and reflection, there were few dry eyes to be found. It was an awakening of the senses.

As leaders, the full composite of our ancestry, our past experiences, role models, teachers, coaches, mentors, values, and beliefs are huge factors in who we are today. We tend to spend too much time doing and not enough time being. What prevents us as visionary leaders to earmark just a few quiet minutes each day to think about where we have been and where we want to go? There is an old proverb that says it best, "A vision without action is a daydream. Action without vision is a nightmare."

As a leader and coach of leaders, I constantly caution my more ambitious clients who are going at full speed with blinders on by telling them, "Speed over direction equates to going nowhere fast."

Since that afternoon in Pittsburgh, I've made it a point to carry on Mr. Rogers' spirit and his powerful message through "One Minute Reflections." In application, it's a great way to re-center and focus everyone prior to beginning a meeting, seminar, or keynote presentation.

To master the art of leadership under pressure, the best training is doing.

Prepare right now to sit quietly and reflect for one minute upon where you are today and where you desire to be tomorrow as a leader. I'll keep the time, please begin. Welcome back. How do you feel?

Mastering the art of leadership under pressure demands that we have control of our emotions and that we practice our values, purpose, and vision to the level of embodiment. Somewhere along the way, someone began a leadership revolution which promotes being disconnected to emotions and unattached to human compassion. Unfortunately, it's epidemic.

Simply saying, doing, or feeling things on occasion, or as needed as a leader, will never lead to mastery. Let's follow Mr. Roger's lead in getting clear on what is really most important in

remembering who we are and where we came from.

### **APPLIED LEADERSHIP:**

1. Why should I make time to reflect on my vision each day?
2. What visions based on my reflections am I willing to commit to writing?
3. What compelling vision am I willing to share with others?

## **DIAMONDS IN THE ROUGH**

### **Begin With Possibility Thinking**

As human beings—like coal—we are energy. The universe is neutral when it comes to the daily distribution of energy. The determining factor simply depends on the levels of energy we bring to the universe each moment of each day. Examples of this have become popular adages such as, “misery loves company” and “what you put into it is what you will get out of it.” As leaders, it all comes down to our attitudes and expectations. Our greatest resources are our energy, time, and talent. Our potential is limited only to the energy we choose to produce.

The key to success as leaders depends on how we manage our energy via our state of being. Success also depends on how quickly we can adapt and recover when our energy is impeded by our own actions or conditions beyond our control.

Growing up in the Pennsylvania coal region has taught me to expect to be dealt a bad hand from time to time. It has come to a point, as crazy as it sounds, that I welcome and embrace the moments in life and in my career that look on the surface to be the most unattractive situations, opportunities, and challenges. From my days as a blue-collar laborer to the executive corner office, I’ve learned to bring good energy to adverse conditions.

The laws of nature call this the “law of polarity.” Simply stated, every adverse situation holds the seed of equal or greater opportunity if we simply look at it from another angle. If natural laws support us as leaders, especially in times of adversity and pressure, why fight it?

It’s too easy to view seemingly meaningless tasks, assignments, appointments, initiatives, and limiting beliefs as a sentence to hard labor on the rock pile. In truth, every situation holds the potential of becoming our diamond mine. To gain greater perspective on this, I encourage you to read the speech “Acres of Diamonds” by Russell Conwell. What you seek to find as a leader is often right under your own feet.

Truth be known, my favorite four-letter word is “can’t.” Tell me I “can’t” do something that I know in my heart is within my ability and it’s a safe bet it will be done against any odds. One simple word holds the power to trigger tremendous will and determination when it comes to uncovering those diamonds. What words trigger your will and determination?

A former boss once told me I couldn’t write. At first blush, I was offended by the fact that number one: I never claimed to be a good writer. Number two, I couldn’t figure out what I had written that made him come to such a premature conclusion. Within three months of that comment, I became a regular monthly columnist to his industry peers throughout our fine state. He motivated me to start uncovering my acres of diamonds!

One of my favorite stories of attempting the impossible involves President John F. Kennedy’s determination to win the “space race” by beating the Russians in setting foot on the moon. President Kennedy challenged rocket scientist Wernher von Braun with a mission. The scientist was questioned at point blank what he thought it would take to build a space ship that could put a man on the moon. Putting aside the scientific details and without hesitation he replied, “The will to do it; we have a job to do.” As we know, the seemingly impossible mission was accomplished with precision and on time.

Mastering the art of leadership under pressure requires one to look at every challenge and situation from every angle—and I do mean every angle—prior to passing judgment or succumbing to hopelessness. When it is your turn to take the lead in a seemingly impossible mission, always begin with a mindset of quiet confidence and act with persistence and patience. Mastery requires no shortcuts.

When we begin every situation and challenge from possibility thinking, there are no limits or boundaries to what can be accomplished. The universe naturally supports those leaders and innovators who dare to challenge themselves and others to take on any challenge with the courage and a will to succeed.

### **APPLIED LEADERSHIP:**

1. What have I learned from my past experiences about uncovering diamonds?
2. What current leadership roles or challenges can be transformed into diamonds?
3. How can I bring positive energy to the most

challenging situations?

## **THE POWER OF MINDSETS**

### **Believing In Yourself & Others**

Leadership requires no titles, nor does a title alone empower one to be a leader.

The moment one becomes a great leader is the deciding moment when meaningful and unselfish action is taken to help others achieve a successful outcome in a given situation. In the heat of the moment, if you have to tell people you are the leader, you probably aren't.

An example of this is when a bystander witnesses a plane crash and plunges into icy waters to save the lives of others who are at great risk.

Napoleon called this "four A.M. courage." As a former volunteer firefighter, I can relate to the rush of adrenaline hearing the alarm sound waking me from a dead sleep to face a roaring inferno within minutes. Leaders under pressure give no mind to anything other than achieving their primary objective. This is an acquired discipline, which requires intensely focused mindsets.

As a personal and business leadership coach, I emphasize the phenomenal power of generating mindsets for every possible situation including: visioning, planning, and goal setting. I've gone as far as to set a theme for each year and for every important interaction with an affirming mindset. In fact my mindset for 2005 is, "Play to win." To you that phrase can mean anything, to me it's a constant reminder that every action and decision must be directed toward a successful outcome for all involved. It works for both personal and organizational leadership.

The greater the intensity related to each mindset, the more powerful it becomes as a driving force toward the achievement of your ultimate objective. The most powerful leadership mindsets are structured as affirming phases that work to trigger intense emotional confidence linked directly to a previously successful life experience.

It is important to clarify that the word "intense" is usually equated with negative experiences. In truth, the level of intensity in any challenge or situation is actually the fuel, which determines the speed, direction, and ultimate result.

When it comes to mastering the art of leadership under pressure, it is best to welcome intensity by learning to transform it into strong emotional drives such as passion, will, enthusiasm,

synergy, and urgency. Nothing creates intensity like a deadline. The Parkinson's Law states that a task expands or contracts to the amount of time allotted. Trust me, I've mastered this law in extremes as a "day jobber" on road construction and as the circulation director of the "daily miracle."

News has the shortest shelf life of any other product in the world; it reproduces itself every moment of every day. When one masters the demands of marketing and distributing news to people's doorsteps 365 days a year, anything looks possible.

Among my favorite situational mindsets is, "nothing you can't handle." Those four words are intensely anchored to a single situation during my private pilot flight training. One nasty day, while executing numerous landings in strong turbulence and crosswinds at Lehigh Valley International Airport (ABE/KABE), Allentown, Pennsylvania, I wrestled for what seemed like eternity to maintain control of the aircraft as pilot in command. This experience is a rite of passage for all FAA certified pilots. At the moment of greatest intensity created by severe wind shear and turbulence, my flight instructor calmly stated, "nothing you can't handle." Those four words were enough to stir the determination and confidence necessary to overcome anything nature threw our way. I earned my wings.

Just one intense moment or event can create a powerful leadership mindset that will serve you well for a lifetime.

A few simple words can work to trigger a powerful emotional state in a moment's notice under any amount of pressure. Thanks to the leadership wisdom of my flight instructor, I not only use this mindset in my own affirming self-talk, but I share it liberally with others to express my confidence in their ability to successfully take charge in adverse situations.

As most high performance leaders, I believe it is important to give back to the industries and communities we serve. Two of my most recent "give-backs" include serving as a SCORE Councilor to America's Small Businesses and mentoring youth each month at the RFK Juvenile Correctional Facility.

In challenging those who want to start a new business or those who want to rebuild a new life, I simply look at them in the eyes and say, "How badly do you want it?" This one purposeful question immediately transforms his or her state of being. It also provokes a direct indication of the sincerity and determination that exists to succeed or overcome his or her challenge. The response does not bode well if it's fake. What I'm actually looking for is a mindset. As we work towards mastery of leadership, it's a

question we need to ask ourselves every day.

For all of us, each day represents a new page and each year a new chapter in our life, and in the lives of those we serve.

### **APPLIED LEADERSHIP:**

1. What major challenges or obstacles am I currently facing?
2. Have I experienced previously successful outcomes to similar challenges?
3. How can I leverage previous intense experiences into powerful mindsets?

### **TAKE NOTHING FOR GRANTED**

#### **Maximize Strengths and Resources**

My leadership coaching compadré Steve Lishansky embodies the belief that, "What we take for granted is among our most powerful and underutilized resource." Why? Because we are so darn good at it that our strengths and the strengths of those we lead appear effortless.

In the quest to leadership mastery we must be constantly aware of natural phenomena and basic human nature. When the pressure is on, people and teams tend to rely on their greatest strengths and instincts. That is exactly why mastering the basics to the level of embodiment is necessary in leadership and teamwork.

As leaders, we are bombarded with a plethora of information on how we should lead our operations according to the flavor of the day. Mastery requires adherence and fine-tuning of processes that will work under any conditions to consistently produce measurable and sustainable results.

This is best exemplified via successful athletic coaches, who have developed a leadership and team building process which is repeatable and transferable.

When my executive leadership clients get wiggy in wanting to change for the sake of change or solve problems from a tactical level, I utilize General Omar Bradley's quote, "We must learn to set our course by the stars, not by every passing ship."

Be the best at playing your own game. Master the rules of the game you are in, and then create your own rules, which far exceed levels of excellence as established by others in your field. Masters

strive to create their own reality rather than constantly reacting to the competition.

I cut my teeth on leadership under pressure as a young volunteer firefighter American Fire Company, No 1, Lansford, Pennsylvania. The leadership disciplines were extreme in terms of conducting business meetings under the most strict adherence to *Robert's Rules of Order*. We trained for consistency and always under the stopwatch, simulating the exact urgency as a live situation. To this day, when assessing trust my mindset remains, "Would I go into a fire with this individual or team?"

Leadership is a privilege, which must be earned and is always being tested every day, especially under pressure. It takes courage to be a leader. It takes the courage to look silly at times, the courage to guard against complacency, and the courage to fully employ our greatest strengths and resources by taking nothing for granted.

Take nothing for granted in uncovering and understanding your strengths and the strengths of those you lead.

### **APPLIED LEADERSHIP:**

1. What gifts do I offer to the world with or without pay?
2. What strengths and resources have I taken for granted?
3. What am I willing to do to insure that I take nothing for granted?

### **MAKE THE BEST OF EVERY SITUATION**

#### **Leading In Adversity**

If we lead long enough and hard enough we can certainly expect to face adverse and seemingly overwhelming odds. These moments are known as the "baptism by fire." They are moments of truth—times when one's calling to leadership is tested to the max, where trust and confidence is gained, and high performance teams are built.

For eighteen years, I served as a leader of circulation and marketing operations in the newspaper industry. Being responsible for the bottom line circulation figures at any newspaper company is like being an NFL Coach 365 games a year.

Circulating and marketing a daily newspaper offers unexpected

obstacles in the never-ending quest to grow circulation and advertising revenue. Working in the northeast requires leaders to overcome in thirty-inch snowstorms, press breakdowns and downturns in the economy. These and many other such leadership challenges are the norm for newspaper industry leaders.

Responding to the immediate urgencies and decisions of disseminating the news as the world watched in horror at the events of 9/11 required extraordinary levels of leadership. It's not a position for the faint of heart. In fact, the worst day of my life as a newspaper executive was on June 9, 1993, when one of our 2,200 newspaper carriers was abducted, raped, and murdered in the most brutal way by Allentown's first serial killer. She was only fifteen years old and had been on the route for less than one month. At times like these a leader must think from every angle, with the greatest concern about the well-being and respect of everyone involved. There is no room for fear—when fear enters, logic leaves.

My dear friend and FAA Flight Examiner Richard Moore, shares this mindset every time we fly by saying, "There is no room for fear in the cockpit." What he is really saying is to always be prepared for, and expect that, at times things will go wrong. In times of adversity, everyone looks to the leader for courage, hope, decisiveness, and direction. They look right into your eyes and can tell immediately if a confident leader is leading them.

September 11 and June 9 were two infamous dates among many in leading through adversity. Both events resulted in people and communities bonding together for a better good. Our young newspaper carrier's untimely death was not in vain as we immediately formed strong alliances with the community. We successfully worked with our carrier force and law enforcement officials to promote safety through teamwork. Not one opportunity goes by, when formally addressing my peers and associates in the newspaper industry, when I neglect to remind them of the importance of carrier safety.

Mastering leadership under pressure and in adversity demands that we never take our hand off the yoke no matter how dire the situation may appear. In the heat of the moment, if you do everything possible to do what is right, good things will result for the betterment of all.

**APPLIED LEADERSHIP:**



1. How do I respond when faced with adversity and crisis?
2. Who do I most admire as a calm and confident leader?
3. In what ways can I apply their best practices?

## **EXPECT EXCELLENCE**

### **Raising The Bar of Expectation**

Effective leaders expect the very best from themselves and from those they serve. This means setting levels of expectation higher than anyone else would even dare. Effective leaders are confident and comfortable in laying down a challenge.

Several years ago, I was elected to serve as chairperson of the Lehigh-Carbon Community College Foundation Board. Fate was smiling on me as I would soon be mentored by two extraordinary leaders, Dr. Jack Berrier, founding president of the college and Dr. Jim Davis, its new president.

Dr. Jim Davis had the distinction at one point in time of being the youngest college president in America. As fate would have it, my two-year term as foundation chairperson would mirror his last two years prior to retirement. You can imagine the experience, wisdom, and firepower behind both these gentlemen.

We had a well-rounded and prestigious roster of talented leaders on our board of directors. Everyone enjoyed their affiliation with the college by name and basic participation levels at the meetings. The problem was, we were only generating a few thousand dollars each year simply to fund scholarships for the sponsoring school districts. Dr. Davis had a different vision of leveraging the foundation board to improve technology and facilities on the campus and beyond.

One quiet morning in a small breakfast nook, Dr. Davis shared his vision with Dr. Berrier and me. He laid down a leadership challenge to grow the foundation funding from \$5,000 to \$300,000 in the first year. Any worthy challenge requires a compelling purpose. This purpose was to purchase and install library automation computers and programs to give our students and faculty access to information available to other large neighboring universities.

We openly shared this new vision and expectation with our board members, the faculty, the media, potential donors, sponsors, and anyone who would listen.

Jim's battle cry was simply, "Don't insult anyone by asking too little of them."

This leadership principle puts it all on the line when the pressure is on to achieve a transformational goal. The philosophy worked by asking everyone—bar none—for their time, talent, and treasure. We insulted no one by asking too little of them.

The next year, the bar of expectation was raised to \$1,000,000 in three years for the purpose of expanding satellite campus facilities and several other advancements.

That goal has long been surpassed and the college continues to grow and prosper each new year.

Masterful leaders strategically create their own positive pressure by laying down a challenge. When this happens, all that is left is the urgency to fully maximize every resource necessary to drive through any and all perceived limitations.

### **APPLIED LEADERSHIP:**

1. For what compelling purpose am I willing to lay down a challenge?
2. When is the best time for me to lay down a challenge?
3. Who might I be insulting by asking too little of them?

### **QUELL THE "IDEA ASSASSINS"**

#### **Innovation Rules**

Think outside the box! What does that mean? I love to innovate, however innovation only exists when individuals and organizations have a box to think outside of. Innovation thrives after the basics are mastered. This means developing a solid process, accountabilities, measurements, and tracking systems for all key result areas critical to the business operations. This also includes establishing a clearly understood and compelling vision, mission, and goals within the organization.

Tracking, forecasting, and measuring of revenues, sales, expenses, customer transactions, and loyalty are all vital result areas. Once those items are nailed down solidly into a perfect box, it's time to innovate!

Albert Einstein believed, "imagination is more important than knowledge." This is based upon the fact that knowledge once

documented is easily researched and found when necessary. As a result, one's mind is uncluttered to think free from needless distractions.

As a former marketing director, it is clear to me that the amount of money spent on a campaign rarely guarantees the level of success in terms of return on investment. The deciding factor always comes down to the amount of creative planning, collaboration, brainstorming, fun, synergy, belief, inclusiveness, appreciation, innovation, teamwork, and commitment invested. The things we tend to be the stingiest with are the driving forces behind extraordinary success. Ironically, they also cost little or nothing to implement.

Many times in my executive career, I encountered dreaded "Idea Assassins." These individuals are nearly impossible to identify with the untrained eye. However, they operate most effectively before, during, and after any meeting designed to evoke new ideas for progress.

They spring into action the moment a new idea has the chance to see the light of day. BANG! Their mortar blasts include, "that won't work," "we've never done it that way before," or "who has time to do that?" Their body language is also a dead giveaway as they try to suck every ounce of energy out of the room.

They make James Carville look like an amateur as they transform into master campaign strategists, rallying to kill any new ideas that may have made it to the next agenda. We know who you are!

My applied leadership strategy for effectively quelling the Idea Assassins was also born through innovative thinking. In building high performance teams, I believe that if there is an underlying cultural or peer related obstacle, it's best to put light on the issue rather than keeping it hidden in the shadows of darkness. Hence, the "Rick Brick" was born! Subtle huh?

Here's how it works. The Rules of Innovation are simple, as they should be:

1. There are no bad ideas.
2. Everyone's ideas and input brings value to the process.
3. Park the judge. Anyone attempting to kill an idea before it has the chance to be fully expressed gets hit with the "Rick Brick." They in turn reserve the right to throw the next brick if the need arises or at themselves if the habit persists. (The "Rick Brick" is made of foam of course. The "Rick Rock" is not, but that's for advanced users only.)

It's important to understand that all new ideas need to be

challenged and critical thinking plays a vital role in every process, but not during the incubation period.

New ideas need room to breathe while feeding off of other ideas to survive and grow. It is the leader's responsibility to facilitate this process.

The implementation of the "Rick Brick" works to bring positive attention to the value of nurturing any new idea. It actually adds fun and laughter to the process. In real world application, it effectively worked to generate extraordinary results and internationally award winning success.

### **APPLIED LEADERSHIP:**

1. What forums can I establish to encourage freethinking innovation?
2. What process am I willing to develop to incubate fresh ideas?
3. In what ways can I facilitate greater fun and synergy with my team?

### **NO ONE SUCCEEDS ALONE**

#### **Growing High Value Networks**

It's difficult to lead without followers. High quality leaders are always in demand. We are also free agents! All successful business executives, owners and entrepreneurs have success cycles. From my personal experience and observations the cycle normally runs in three- to five-year periods.

When a high performance leader takes on a new challenge, performance measurements and cultural changes are usually implemented and are zinging along by the start of year three. By the end of year five, the itch begins for a new and greater challenge. Everyone's cycles and situations can vary.

It's fairly common to hear executive leaders say in times of transition, "I've left my networks down." This means we've become so focused on the challenge at hand for a sustained period of time, that we've lost sight of our networking resources.

We cannot always control the economy, downsizing, competition, values gaps, and all the conditions that force career change. However, we do have full and total control of the way we manage our career and leverage our network resources. When the pressure is on, the quality of our personal and business

relationships are often the lifeline to a successful career transition.

Building high value relationships and circles of influence is an art. Our skills and strategies must be practiced and applied daily toward mastery. The key is balance. Keeping one's nose to the grindstone ultimately hurts! Unfortunately, many individuals in top leadership positions tend to delegate networking activities to others thus losing the personal touch necessary for life-long success.

Building personal and professional networks resulting in high value relationships is a daily process. Like any successful business plan or strategy, our personal and professional networks should be organized, prioritized, and exercised for mutual benefit.

Money is tight and competition is fierce. When it comes to winning the game of customer growth, satisfaction, and loyalty, it's all about building and growing high value relationships. Never let your networks down, especially when the pressure is on.

### **APPLIED LEADERSHIP:**

1. Have I fully identified in writing the top twelve people in my circle of influence?
2. What goals will I set for growing and building high value relationships?
3. How can I strategically communicate with my individual networks?

### **LEAP AND THE NET WILL APPEAR**

#### **Take A Leap Of Faith**

One of the most powerful sessions I facilitate with my leadership coaching clients is called "Life Purpose." Becoming certified by Dr. Joan C. King in this process enabled me to shed much of my corporate baggage and become much more open to spirit. I've since learned to apply this mindset to every aspect of my practice and life.

A major transformation for me was the openness and awareness of letting go by not trying to control everything as a leader, coach, facilitator, speaker, and writer. As a result, I experience little miracles everyday in the most unusual and profound ways. I've learned under pressure and strict deadlines that force tends to negate the desired result. As a leader, it is

possible at times to push too hard.

When we allow ourselves to enter a state of being that is supported by our true-life purpose, values, identity, and natural abundance, we can learn to perform in the “excellence zone” at will. We’ve all experienced this place many times in our lives, so trust and believe that it is not a matter of happenstance.

When I was first launching Success Partners, my mindset was, “no shortcuts.”

As a result, I actively interviewed successful people already established in my new field, seeking wisdom, advice, and mentors.

One such gentleman provided me with sound business advice that proved to be successful in actual application. For his time and advice, I promptly sent off a personalized thank-you card. On the front of the card it stated, “Leap and the Net Will Appear.”

Several months later, the same gentleman approached me with a large grin on his face. After a friendly exchange, he informed me that the card I had sent him was worth more value than I could have ever imagined. He had agreed to take on leadership of a major funding campaign for his church with a goal of \$1,000,000. Previous goals totaled only a few thousand dollars. At the point when they were just about to give up on their unified attempt at the monumental goal, the card appeared in his mail. Inspired by the card’s inscription, he gave the campaign a new name titled. “Leap of Faith.” It proved to be the key to unlocking the synergy necessary to successfully surpass the intended goal. Coincidence? I think not!

Many leaders and teams give up just one step short of achieving their desired results, never knowing how close they really were to success. That’s where leaders with faith leap far beyond those who always play it safe.

During my keynote presentations, I often share a page out of a very powerful and inspirational literary classic titled, *Oh, The Places You’ll Go!* by Dr. Seuss. On that particular page is a warning to those who wish to succeed in life to avoid the “Waiting Room.” People in that room are just waiting for one more thing to happen before they can achieve their desired results in life.

We are all blessed with the abundance of achieving anything we are willing to set our minds to. When we begin from possibility thinking, nothing is impossible.

## **APPLIED LEADERSHIP:**

1. When was the last time I found myself in the “excellence zone”?
2. In what ways am I willing to give up control and trust faith?
3. What energy do I bring to those I lead?

## **LEAVING A LEGACY OF LEADERSHIP**

### **Giving Back**

Now more than ever our communities, companies, country, and world is in need of high quality leaders who can handle power and pressure with dignity, respect and grace.

Through all my years in leading and helping others to achieve extraordinary results, I’ve learned to focus on the people and manage the numbers. When we build teams based on trust and a compelling vision, the numbers will be achieved.

Thank you for sharing your time with me and I challenge you to go forth with pride in turning coal into diamonds. I am forever grateful for the powerful life lessons in leadership experiences my family, parents, friends, mentors, and associates provided me. Special thanks to my mentor coaches, Dr. Joan C. King and Steve Lishansky who masterfully shine in the art of coaching others to be their best.

When I was elected as the youngest president in the eighty-six-year history of a highly respected newspaper trade association representing five states and Washington, D.C., a wise mentor pulled me aside and said, “Whatever you do, do it well enough to leave a legacy or don’t do it at all.” His challenge stuck with me that day and has stayed with me every day since.

I challenge you with the same words today. Our legacy as leaders will be measured by the volume and quality of those we inspire to greatness each and every day.

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

As president and CEO of Success Partners, Rick Forgay is dedicated to helping business leaders and teams master the art of leadership, teamwork, strategic planning and goal achievement. Success Partners services include: Personal and Business Leadership Coaching; Customized Seminars and Workshops; Strategic Planning Retreats and High Impact Keynote Presentations. Rick is effective in helping leaders gain clarity and stay focused on their most important objectives. Clients benefit from Rick's eighteen years of corporate leadership experience as an internationally award winning circulation and marketing executive in the newspaper industry. His leadership coaching principles and practices are measurable and sustainable under real world pressures and demands. Rick has led, coached and mentored literally thousands throughout his career and beyond. He served as a circulation committee chairman and as a highly rated seminar instructor at the Pennsylvania Newspaper Association and President of the Inter-State Circulation Managers Association representing daily and weekly newspapers throughout Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, West Virginia and Washington, DC. As a civic and government leader, he served as president in the fields of Industrial Development; Community Planning; and Parks & Recreation. He also served as chairperson of the Lehigh-Carbon Community College Foundation Board and as Media Director on the Corporate Board of Directors of the Pennsylvania State Police Camp Cadet Program. Rick also shares unique perspectives and life experiences as an athlete, volunteer firefighter, blue-collar laborer, martial artist, private pilot and parent. His coaching methods are measurable, sustainable and transferable to personal and business success.





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# CHAPTER TWO

Leading for Change:

Lessons from the field of Criminal Justice Treatment

Kenneth L. Osborne

## The Call for Leadership

In the Pacific Northwest a rural community corrections treatment program is deemed ineffective because it lacks the funding resources to provide residential and transportation services to clients. The agency wasn't aware it needed to develop a sustainability plan after receiving initial funding.

In the Mid-Atlantic, a psychiatrist and a treatment program warden for a medium security Therapeutic Community are overheard by team members commenting that they couldn't wait for the day to end to go out and drink to relieve their work related stress. When confronted on the inappropriate and mixed message comment they minimized the incident by stating they were only going out for beers, what was the harm?

In the Midwest a probation officer withholds information from a Judge when a probationer is in direct violation of a court order by working in a strip club. In addition, the probation officer begins a romantic involvement with the probationer, covering up various other probation violations. The officer is later arrested for assault and battery of the probationer. It was also discovered that the officer had a long history sexual and romantic involvement with probationers that no one ever detected or suspected.

In the Southwest, a case manager for a women's community correction program withholds information from a drug court team regarding a client's active use of drugs while in the program. The case manager stated that the prosecutor on the team would only be invested in returning her client to prison.

In the New England area a Judge is confused as to why program clients successfully complete all phases of the residential treatment program, yet rapidly return to the use of drugs upon "graduation" from the program. When queried as to how the treatment program benefits the clients, the Judge's response was, "I leave all of that treatment mumbo jumbo to those folks over there to figure out."

These and countless other examples indicate that leadership in the field of criminal justice treatment is in crisis. In my travels

around the country I have witnessed criminal justice treatment professionals comfortable and crippled by “paradigm paralysis” or when a way of seeing things becomes a way of not seeing things.

One example of this behavior is a belief that *they* do not need to change; *offenders* do. This old criminal justice mind set was nurtured during the Industrial Age or what Russell Ackoff calls the “Machine Age.” With control as it’s guiding ethic, the Machine Age spurned generations of control thinkers. *“If people don’t behave the way we expect them to the solution is to lock more people up, assign longer sentences, take away more rights, stifle more creativity, intimidate more people, and use the death penalty when necessary.”* This is another example of erroneous thinking some professionals practice when dealing with drug offenders. This control mind-set results in behaviors and interactions between criminal justice and substance abuse treatment professionals that reinforce distance, dissonance, and poor outcomes. The resulting judicial response to drug involved persons only serves to feed and fatten the problem.

## Is Help Possible?

*“We must focus more attention on the conditions of incarcerated persons...to put people behind walls and bars and do little or nothing to change them is to win a battle but lose a war. It is wrong. It is expensive. It is stupid.”*

-Chief Justice Warren Burger  
February 1981

*“Can people who are addicted to drugs and crime really change?”* This is a question I have often been asked after lectures or presentations. My answer is always “yes” with some of the following considerations. I believe real change is possible if:

- The offender stands in the place of decisional balance also known as “a defining moment”
- Through structured therapeutic interventions (i.e., specific therapies for offenders) and change processes that are wholistic (i.e., engagements that get to the heart of matters)
- If the agencies, systems, and individuals who serve them change as well

The last statement is what this chapter is about—criminal justice treatment professionals being willing to confront, become aware of, and take action in dealing with their own self-defeating

tendencies, biases, stereotypes, and values. Further, they must be able to agree on processes and responses resulting in the dissolution or shake-up in the status quo of the addictive disorder so that new positive patterns of behavior can be developed.

We begin by examining how early American history helped shape attitudes and values regarding drug use, gain insight on what hasn't worked and why, and finally, explore what leaders of change in the field are doing. But before we get to the good stuff, I thought I'd share some of my own personal journey into the field of addiction treatment.

## **Change or Die**

For a period of time I was a casualty on the other side of the "War on Drugs" a term made popular during the Nixon administration mimicking the Johnson administration's language regarding its "War on Poverty." For the most part I had beaten the odds. I graduated from high school and made it out of the hood alive without having to join a gang or go to jail. I grew up hearing and being taught anti-drug messages. But being an addict isn't about what you know; it's about what you do. I used and became addicted to drugs. I didn't use drugs because I grew up on the west side of Chicago in a single female head-of-household home in the projects, or because addiction and alcoholism runs through my family tree, or because I grew up without a father, or because I experienced gang violence, and the black power/women's liberation/sex/drugs/rock and roll counter culture movements. While any of these factors might be a contributor or helped establish a predisposition for using drugs, in the end *I made a choice* to know what getting high was all about. I learned later in life that getting high was about filling a gaping hole inside of me. I was *spiritually bankrupt*. In my early twenties I had a *defining moment*.

At the end of my addictive run I had lost a son, distanced myself from loved ones, and had hurt any number of people emotionally and mentally. I knew something had to change. I sat in the seat of decisional balance and made a choice—change or die. I thank the Creator my decision was as simple as that. There were no gray areas in my thinking. I decided to change and began what Wayne Dyer describes as a "Sacred Quest." I would change my cultural affiliation from those who sought, found and used drugs to those who chose a drug free path. I began a revolution of the mind, body, and spirit against a chemical antagonist initially and later against learned patterns of self-defeating behavior and healing emotional

wounds.

I learned that the price of recovery is vigilance and adherence to spiritual principles. I had to be the change I wanted to see in others.

I had no plans whatsoever of working with addicts, working in treatment systems, or in the criminal justice system. Prior to working in behavioral health and addictions treatment, I worked as a manager in a variety of settings including employment services, transportation, and retail merchandising to name a few.

In 1987, I relocated from Chicago to Corpus Christi, Texas. I had been offered a position with a major food concern at a decent salary. There I met a “wizard” named Bradley Welfare, a program manager in behavioral health who introduced me to the treatment field. I asked him about being able to facilitate a twelve-step meeting for adults on the addiction unit a couple of times a week. Brad smiled and asked me if I would like a job. I replied I couldn’t charge for what had been so freely given to me. He laughed and said a most peculiar thing to me, *“when you become a counselor, and I have no doubt that you’ll be a good one, learn all you can about this disease. Don’t become one of those guys who define help only by their personal story.”*

I laughed and continued to ask about just doing a meeting. A few years later I was a certified drug counselor. I was educated in the Parkside (aka Lutheran General) CD Counselors training program. I’ve been blessed to have such great credible role models like William J. Womack, who taught me counseling skills; Barbara Sue Ford, who taught me not to take myself too seriously; Renee Adams, who taught me critical thinking, how to lead a treatment team, and to trust myself; Lloyd Butler and Mr. Degafu, who afforded me the opportunity to address treatment issues from a cultural perspective as well as conduct international travel to develop business relationships; and Dr Timothy Sharma and his wife Dr. Alice Hiniker, who gave me my first program to supervise. These individuals and many others set the tone and standard for me about professionalism in the addictions field.

## **A Historic Snapshot of Addiction in America**

It is critical that criminal justice treatment professionals explore the history of drug addiction in America as a means of ending *“generational forgetting”* and to develop new intervention strategies based upon what we know. Mankind has had a relationship with drugs since the dawn of time and it appears that every twenty years or so we are faced with a new drug

crisis/epidemic in part because we failed to learn from our previous encounters.

Early colonial history bears this is out as that time period was afflicted with the pervasive and oldest known drug to man—alcohol. It was during this period a new type of drinker and drinking institution emerged. The Spanish, English, Dutch, and French settlers all brought new patterns in speech and religion as well as alcohol to America and immediately set about ensuring its continued supply. Early Americans drank at home and at work. Alcohol was integrated into most social and political situations. Although there were laws passed to control public drunkenness, *drinking wasn't perceived as a problem*. Benjamin Rush (1746-1813) congressman, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, and Physician General chronicled the medical consequences of chronic drinking and called the process toward alcohol addiction "*a disease of the will.*"

The Industrial Revolution brought about sweeping changes to American family life. The social dislocation of families due to the Western frontier movement, the spread of the railroad, the rise to economic power of enterprises, the invention of the telephone and communications technology, mining, and the exploitation of timber are but a few of those changes. These changes served to create a class of men whose work and leisure activities centered on drinking. America's changing drinking rituals were reflected in the evolution of the tavern to the saloon. Saloons and "cathouses" became a place of refuge for the alone and lonely fathers and sons building the new frontier. Different from its cousin the tavern, the saloon quickly became associated with violence, crime, vice, and political corruption. On the horizon at the end of the nineteenth century was the problem of narcotics use and the utilization of racial and gender profiling to determine dangerous drugs users.

Technologic and chemical advances in the first half of the nineteenth century with Opium gave birth to Codeine, Morphine and Heroin. While a growing medical community embraced European American opium and morphine users, the dominant profile of the Opiate addict during this time was that of a woman addicted to the use of opiate laced medicines and Chinese Americans.

America's first bout with cocaine lasted from the 1880s until 1930 and then reappeared in the 1970s. With each episode cocaine was initially described as harmless. Little known facts regarding cocaine include: 1) Cocaine was considered a "Negro"

drug 125 years ago, whereas opiates, and specifically heroin was described as characteristically used by whites. (In the period of 1895 to 1915 cocaine became associated in the popular and medical press with southern blacks hostility toward whites) Heinous crimes were said to have been committed by blacks and were attributed to the effects of cocaine, although direct evidence for such a close and specific racial association was sorely lacking. 2) Intrigued by a medical report on the use of cocaine to suppress fatigue among soldiers, Sigmund Freud began to experiment with the drug himself. He chronicled his experiences in medical journals, extolled the value of cocaine as a stimulant, aphrodisiac, a treatment for nervous disorders, digestive problems, venereal disease, and asthma. He even discussed the role of cocaine as a treatment for morphine addiction. This theory was debunked when Freud used cocaine to treat Dr. Ernst Von Fleischl in 1884 for morphine addiction. The reality of the miracle cure is that the initial positive response gave way to escalating dosages of cocaine. Within a year Fleischl was injecting a gram a day and began experiencing classic paranoia and hallucinations from cocaine psychosis. Freud came under attack by many of his peers, particularly by Dr. Friedrich Erlenmeyer.

Dr. Erlenmeyer described cocaine as the third scourge of the human race (behind alcohol and morphine) and he held Freud responsible for its spread.

In the early 1920s a growing fear centered in the Southwest United States about a plant grown and used by Mexican farmers. This plant was known as *locoweed* or more scientifically cannabis. Cannabis was accused of stimulating violence and being slyly sold to American school children. The "Mexican problem" as it was defined back then, was determined a federal offense by the Treasury Department and led to the Marijuana Tax Act in October 1937. Marijuana was viewed as a fearsome substance but was significantly downplayed. Historians of that era believed this was due to the fact that Marijuana grew within the borders of the United States.

In the early twentieth century there was growing discontent among state and local governments that could not correct drug abuse problems. State reformers looked for assistance from the federal government that appeared aloof from many social problems to step in. This federal aloofness was the result of the separation between federal and state powers. Federal government intervention states saw the passage of the Pure Food

and Drug Act in 1906, The Smoking Opium Exclusion Act of 1908, The Hague Treaty, the Harrison Act of 1914, and the development of the Federal Bureau of Narcotics (FBN). All of these efforts served to assist the State, Treasury, and Agriculture Departments develop federal narcotic policies. These policies helped clearly define the social and medical value of drugs as well as provide laws that more closely controlled the sales, excessive or careless prescribing, and smuggling of narcotics.

At the cessation of hostilities when WWII ended, Americans saw a quick and dramatic rise in addiction among ghetto youth in large urban cities in the mid 1940s. There was a rough estimate of 60,000 narcotic addicts in America—an unprecedented number for that time. It was clear the disease of addiction was spreading, but not evenly along racial lines. In 1955 in Detroit, 1,812 people were arrested for narcotics violations; 1,593 of these were classified as “Negro,” 184 “white,” 12 “yellow,” and 23 “Mexican.”

The steady rise in drug use resulted in the Federal Bureau of Narcotics putting into play *a request for stronger penalties, particularly mandatory minimum sentencing* through Congressional hearings.

The Boggs Act of 1951 served as an amendment to the Harrison Narcotics Act of 1914; imposing harsher penalties for all narcotics and marijuana offenses. In 1956, after Senate hearings chaired by Senator Daniel Price, *the death penalty* was allowed at the jury’s discretion in some instances of heroin sales.

In the 1960s students, writers, and philosophers became intrigued with LSD. Many believe the psychedelic revolution of the ’60s led to the middle class youth rebellion. When middle class youth adopted a wide range of unconventional behaviors, including the use of LSD and other illicit psychoactive drugs, the nation combated the problem by trying to scare kids straight, provide school based prevention education, and treatment as a penalty for their criminal behavior. The 1970s saw a softening of anti-drug laws and the return of a more therapeutic response to addicted persons, while the ’80s and ’90s saw a renewal in criminal justice severity for illicit drug use.

This historic snapshot surrounding drug addiction in this country reveals an established pattern of conditioned responses that are pervasive today:

- Significant sociological and technological changes often played a key role in stimulating drug use among Americans.
- Despite laws developed to address public behavior



resulting from drug use incarceration has been an unsuccessful deterrent.

- There is a history of “generational forgetting” about the impact of drug use on our society.
- Early attempts at developing a narcotics control policy did little to deter illicit drug use.
- The government sends mixed messages regarding the dangers of drugs by legalizing some but not others.
- The convenience of racial profiling as a means to discuss the drug problem is not new and has resulted in the disproportionate incarceration of young African American males.

## What Hasn't Worked and Why

We want them to be non-violent,

**So we put them where violence is all around.**

We want them to be kind loving people,

**So we subject them to hatred and cruelty.**

We want them to quit being the tough guy,

**So we put them where the tough guy is respected.**

We want them to quit hanging around losers,

**So we put all the losers in the state under one roof.**

We want them to have self worth,

**So we take away all responsibility.**

We want them to be positive and constructive,

**So we degrade them and make them useless.**

We want them to be trustworthy,

**So we put them where there is no trust.**

We want them to quit exploiting us,

**So we put them where they exploit one another.**

We want them to take control of their lives,  
own their problems and quit being a parasite,

**So we make them dependant on us.**

- Judge Dennis Challeen

A part of the “War on Drugs” has been a response of trying to contain the drug problem through incapacitation. The National Institute of Correction estimates that 30 percent of America’s prisoners are behind bars for drug related crimes. This response has helped shape three main characteristics of unsuccessful interventions: 1) The principal goal is usually external control and punishment, 2) Treatment services, if offered, are not an integral part of the program, and 3) Staff often does not serve as credible role models. They often say one thing and do another including

use drugs, drink abusively and break the law.

Terence Gorski identifies that 80 percent of criminal offenders who commit drug related crimes have serious chemical use disorders. Of that figure, 15 percent commit crimes to support their habit and the other 65 percent are chemically dependent and have a criminal personality disorder. Attempts to legislate and punish this behavior have resulted in the United States' justice system becoming the largest multi-billion dollar industrial complex specializing in surveillance and confinement in the free world. This strategy hasn't worked because of the volume of drug offenders and attempting to lock them all up is completely unrealistic. Putting drug offenders behind bars without treatment or follow-up services results in creating a culture that holds terror for precious few and introduces many to the most sophisticated crime school on the planet.

Other failed strategies include: Scared Straight, vocational training in prison and on the outside, insight oriented psychotherapy, non-behavioral group counseling, diversion, physical challenges programming, and sending staff to trainings to implement new therapeutic or behavioral techniques that wind up unsupported (in some cases unknown) by administration.

What hasn't worked seems be rooted in 1) the use of incapacitation as a deterrent, 2) the lack of understanding of addiction as a complex illness, and 3) the creation of double standard responses for addictive behavior dependent upon who is using drugs and what they are using.

## **The Culture of Addiction**

The *culture of addiction* is an informal social network of individuals whose drug use and antisocial behaviors serve as reflective mirrors. It encompasses values, places, rituals, music, and symbols. The "*pilgrimage*" into drugs and crime seems to begin with individuals shaking up the status quo of their life. They go from being uninterested in self-destructive and self-defeating behavior to becoming involved, attached and then locked into this negative lifestyle.

Addicts begin with the intentional use of a chemical or commission of a crime. If there is an appetitive attachment, continued use or behavior is likely to occur. Further down the road they generally become self-serving, victimize or objectify others, defy authority, and expect to escape adverse consequences. For them anyone who attempts to interfere with their using or victimization of others becomes the enemy or the "real" problem.

Now entrenched in a complex maze of repetitive thoughts, perceptions, feelings, and actions that serves as the brick and mortar of addiction, the user begins to believe a non-addicted existence is impossible. For them this was never the plan. In my years of counseling I have never met a client who said to me all they ever wanted out of life was to be a drug addict and a criminal, yet there they were—a drug addict and a criminal.

### **Leading for Change: What Works**

What works in the treatment of drug involved offenders begins with a simple premise: *you can't correct a problem with the same mind that created it*. Justice treatment services do not suffer from a lack of information or professional preparedness—many suffer from being locked into self-defeating postures of control disguised as help.

Today we know that change is possible and that agencies and individuals must remain vigilant against the common enemies of the recovery and change process. Here then are some examples of what works and is revolutionizing the way criminal justice treatment professionals operate when treating drug-involved offenders:

1. *Successful programming*—The characteristics of successful programs are:
  - They access *Actuarial Risks and Needs*—Programs develop and maintain a system of assessing drug offenders in a reliable and valid manner.
  - They enhance *Intrinsic Motivations*—Behavioral change is an inside job. For lasting change to occur, a level of intrinsic motivation is necessary.
  - They conduct *Targeted Interventions*—Four principles are accessed to conduct effective intervention: risk, need, client responsiveness, and treatment. The last consideration is dosage or exposure to the change process services.
  - They engage support from the *Natural Communities*—Programs realign and engage pro-social supports for drug offenders in their communities.
  - They measure *Relevant Processes and Practices*—Programs provide accurate and detailed documentation of case information, along with a formal and valid mechanism for measuring outcomes.

*Model the way*—Some very important names associated with revolutionizing the concept of “modeling the way” for traditional

treatment and criminal justice professionals are: Emmitt Hayes, Dudley Bush, Robin Roberts-Harven, Robert Wiley, Sandra Buell, and Martin Lababera. I was afforded the opportunity to work beside these individuals during former Texas Governor Ann Richards' ambitious statewide Criminal Justice Treatment Initiative. They are the architects of an experiential learning model that borrowed tenets of the Therapeutic Community (TC) allowing trainees to build a "training community" where they experienced the emotional exposure and social learning of the TC.

The end result was a model of how corrections and treatment professionals developed professional integrity by becoming credible role models. In her book *"A Marriage Made Behind Bars"* Robin Roberts-Harven describes what have become quintessential ingredients in the development of credible criminal justice treatment role models:

- Always attune to your own humanness and the humanity of your clients
- Truthfully represent yourself
- Don't overreact—know your limits
- Consistently maintain the integrity of the community
- Practice rational authority by being rational
- Carry the vision for what the client can become, don't lower the standards
- Practice the principles with other staff as well as clients

Years later people still talk about how the training positively impacted their professional (and sometimes personal) lives.

Practice Therapeutic Jurisprudence—Therapeutic Jurisprudence is defined as "The use of social science to study the extent to which a legal rule or practice promotes the psychological and physical well being of the people it effects." From its narrow start in mental health law it has emerged as an inter- and multi-disciplinary approach. Therapeutic Jurisprudence requires legislators, judges and practitioners to make legal policy determinations based on empirical studies and not on uninformed hunches. While it should not be used as a dominant perspective, it has become an excellent tool to examine the array of issues presented by clients that impacts the law as well as quality of life, assisting an individual from antisocial to prosocial behaviors. One of the main vehicles for the implementation and practice of Therapeutic Jurisprudence has been Drug Treatment Courts.

1. *Think Outside the Box*—If you're on a team where there is no trust, where there is fear, and silence, where

individuals appear hell bent on punishing, rescuing, and keeping secrets, then you, your organization, the drug offenders you serve, and the public suffer because you are “inside the box.” Being outside of the box is: 1) When the mission statement and organizational values become something more than well written documents, 2) Where there is individual and team responsibility and accountability, and 3) Where candor and modeling the way become core values alongside public safety and public health. For criminal justice treatment professionals, being outside the box is developing prison and community based Therapeutic Communities, Drug Courts, utilizing computer based research tracking, using the Stages of Change and practicing Restorative Justice Concepts. These therapeutic innovations and technology help create positive change.

2. *Know the Five Dysfunctions of Teams*—Teams rise and fall by what they know about how they function and correcting the roadblocks. Patrick Lencioni’s excellent leadership fable *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team* provides a modern example of what happens when personalities, agendas, habits, and unresolved life issues collide in the work place. In order, the five dysfunctions are: *an absence of trust, fear of conflict, lack of commitment, avoidance of accountability and inattention to results*. Don’t let the five dysfunctions derail your team.
3. *Practice and employ the Enduring Skills*—Rosabeth Moss Kanter states that in order for lasting change to occur, a set of what she terms “*Enduring Skills*” are necessary for those leading change efforts. The Enduring Skills are:
  - The *imagination to innovate*—encouraging new ideas, concepts, models and treatment applications for drug-involved offenders.
  - The *professionalism to perform*—Institutions and organizations that serve drug involved offenders provide personal and organizational competence through training and development.
  - The *openness to collaborate*—Treatment Leaders make the necessary connections with partners who make wholistic service rendering possible for offenders.

For several years I have had the opportunity to meet and work beside a cross-section of great change agents whose use of the

Enduring Skills in their professional practices embodies out-of-the-box thinking. From Judges like Jay B. Roof (Washington), Ellen Deshazer (California), John Crezout (Texas) Melanie May (Florida) J. Michael Joiner (Alabama) Prosecutor: Carol Berger (New Jersey) or Special District Attorney: Helen Harberts (California), Justice Treatment Professionals: Lars Levy (Louisiana), David Deitch (California), Mitchell Mackinem (South Carolina), Carol Venditto (New Jersey) Educators and Researchers: Andrew Osborne (New York), Roger Peters (Florida) and Doug Marlowe (Pennsylvania), Defense Attorney: Barry Workman (Alabama) Police Officers: Cynthia Herriott (New York) and Vanessa Price (Oklahoma) Trainer and Consultant Janiece Seigriest (Oklahoma), Suzette Brann (Maryland, Jane Pfeifer (Louisiana) Political Officials like former Governor Ann Richards, the late Senator Paul Wellstone (Minnesota), Senator Barack Obama (Illinois), Congressman Danny Davis (Illinois), Deputy Mayor Herbert Tillery (Washington, D.C.) and literally hundreds of other professionals. These individuals practice collaboration, teamwork and conflict resolution in order to make the world a better place—they walk the walk.

## **Conclusion**

This concludes my thoughts on leading for change. I'd like to thank Dona Howell from the Illinois Department of Corrections for her assistance in editing this writing. It is my hope that this information will serve as a beginning for some and a reminder for others to turn a corner in their thinking and behavior. May you practice the change you want to see in your clients. We have been afforded a great opportunity to change history regarding the treatment of a most difficult population to serve. Our efforts will be remembered long after we are gone—let's not blow it.

## **Conclusion**

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# CHAPTER THREE

## Live a Leadership Legacy

Mark Fulton

Someone once observed that “boss” spelled backwards is double S-O-B. Unfortunately, there are plenty of men and women in positions of authority whose behavior validates that quip. They threaten, coerce, cajole, and bamboozle the people who work for them in order to reach company objectives. While such behavior may produce a desired outcome, it shouldn’t be confused with good leadership.

Singer Dolly Parton said it best when she described an excellent leader as someone whose “actions create a legacy that inspires others to dream more, learn more, do more, and become more.” As Dolly’s comment suggests, an inspiring leadership legacy doesn’t just happen; rather, it is the result of the purposeful and diligent application of specific skills over the long term. You have to live a leadership legacy before you can leave one for the next generation.

A legacy is a vestige of your life that remains after you are gone. A tangible legacy may be money or property left to somebody as part of an estate. A leadership legacy is a gift that you give to the next generation of leaders in your organization. It is a standard of excellence, a set of values, and a model for behavior for those who will take up the mantle of authority and responsibility in the future. It is an endowment of ideals and ideas that form the foundation upon which future leadership legacies can be built.

Great leaders, those who leave an admirable leadership legacy, come in all sizes and shapes, but they share some common attributes. Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King Jr., Mother Teresa, and Sam Walton couldn’t be more dissimilar in appearance, yet they all possessed a clear sense of purpose, unshakable probity, keen perceptivity, steadfast positivity, and unwavering perseverance. Living a leadership legacy means developing and demonstrating these leadership characteristics.

### **Purpose—Creating and Casting a Clear Vision**

On June 12, 1987, President Ronald Reagan stood in front of the Brandenburg Gate at the Berlin Wall and challenged the leader of the Soviet Union with these words: “General Secretary Gorbachev, if you seek peace, if you seek prosperity for the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, if you seek liberalization: Come here to

this gate! Mr. Gorbachev, open this gate! Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!" Two years later, Reagan's stirring words became reality with the fall of the Berlin Wall, followed soon thereafter by the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe.

Ronald Reagan championed four "Pillars of Freedom": individual liberty, economic opportunity, global democracy, and national pride. In keeping with those principles, Reagan made it clear that confronting communist aggression was a primary purpose of his administration. When Reagan referred to the Soviet Union as an "evil empire," critics blasted that characterization as simplistic and unsophisticated. Nevertheless, Reagan's message resonated with many Americans, as well as people who had lived behind the Iron Curtain for decades. Today, Eastern Europe is free from communist tyranny, due in no small part to the vision of freedom that Reagan consistently communicated during his presidency.

In your role as a leader, creating and casting a clear vision is critical to the health of your organization and a major part of your leadership legacy. A corporate vision provides the foundation for setting goals, planning strategies, and making decisions. It gives purpose to every endeavor and provides a standard for evaluating outcomes.

In the early '90s, Honda Motor Company declared a seemingly strange corporate goal for its sales force—"Six Hondas in Every Garage by the Year 2000." The company's leaders were attempting to create a vision that focused on the breadth of the Honda product line—motorcycles, generators, lawn mowers, snow blowers, air compressors, farm equipment—as well as its automobiles. It was a vivid vision that energized Honda's sales force.

Does your business have a vision that fires your employees' imagination and inspires your customers' loyalty? If not, consider drafting a corporate vision statement that will give your business a clear focus and will beef up your bottom line.

A vision statement provides both internal and external benefits to your company. It plays a key role in the performance standards you set for your employees and it serves as a guide for making customer service decisions. A vision statement sets the tone for ethical behavior and presents a starting point for your leadership team's thinking on strategic issues, especially during times of significant change.

Likewise, your external relationships benefit from a vision statement because it clearly communicates your business's objectives to your customers, suppliers, strategic partners and

other stakeholders. It also makes recruiting good employees easier by attracting individuals who are motivated by clearly defined goals. Used strategically in your marketing and public relations efforts, a vision statement can send a potent message to the rest of the world.

An effective vision statement is a concise, motivating, and memorable description of your business's ideal future that people can picture in their minds. Typically, a vision statement originates at the corporate level. However, employees at all company levels should be involved in crafting it, if you want everyone to buy into it.

There are many approaches to creating a corporate vision statement, but the process doesn't have to be complicated. Answer these questions and you'll be well on your way:

**What are the core values that guide the behavior of this company?** Core values should represent the unwavering beliefs of your business's leadership team. They are principles that influence decisions every day at every level and define what is permissible and what is not. Examples of core values include: ethical business practices, respect for individuals, and fairness in all relationships.

**What is the core purpose of this company?** Your core purpose is your company's reason for existing beyond providing profit. What does your company contribute to the world? Look beyond the products or the services you provide to the outcomes they produce. For example, the purpose of my wife's orthodontic practice is not merely to straighten teeth, but to create happiness through healthy and beautiful smiles.

**What would the ideal image of this company look like to our employees, customers, suppliers, and the community?** The answers to this question should encompass the things that make your company unique from your competitors. Your answers will provide you with standards for measuring your progress toward your vision and they will identify training and other resources you'll need in order to get where you want to go.

Use your responses to these questions to create a vision statement with no more than three sentences. Remember, it should be concise, motivating, and memorable. State your vision in the present tense, as though it is already an accomplished fact. Doing so creates a dynamic, inspiring connection with the future that makes the vision seem more real and attainable. Finally, enlist everyone on your team to submit a final vision statement. You might even offer a reward to the person whose rendition is

selected.

Dwight Eisenhower left a significant leadership legacy as Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force in Europe during World War II, President of Columbia University, Supreme Commander of NATO, and President of the United States. He once said, “We succeed only as we identify in life, or in war, or in anything else, a single overriding objective, and make all other considerations bend to that one objective.” Give your team a purpose for their work by giving them a vision toward which to strive and you will establish a firm foundation for your leadership legacy.

## **Probity—Building Relationships on the Bedrock of Trust**

Have you ever been the victim of one of these infamous business fabrications?

- The check is in the mail
- We service what we sell
- A representative will call you right back
- Money cheerfully refunded
- One size fits all

Yes, some businesses really mean it when they make statements like those. But I’ll bet you can think of at least a few occasions when you got less than you expected after hearing or reading one of those assertions. You probably reacted as most people do and felt disappointed, displeased, or deceived.

An organization’s sense of purpose must be guided by a firm commitment to probity, which is an old-fashioned word meaning unimpeachable honesty, complete sincerity, and unwavering fairness. Probity provides the raw material for the most valuable asset a business can possess: trust.

“To be trusted is a greater compliment than to be loved,” wrote Scottish novelist George MacDonald. That’s because the truest test of good character is trustworthiness, not charm. We can love others despite their faults, but we can’t depend on someone we don’t trust. Without trust, marriages fail, friendships falter—and businesses fold.

When you earn the trust of employees, customers, and vendors, you establish sound and profitable relationships that form the pillars of your business’s success. Conversely, if you squander trust, employees stop working, customers stop buying, and vendors stop delivering.

If trust is indeed the most precious capital of commerce, then earning trust should be a priority for you as you establish your

leadership legacy. Here are five principles of probity that engender trust and foster solid relationships.

**Integrity**—John Quincy Adams once said, “To believe all men honest would be folly. To believe none so, is something worse.” There will always be unscrupulous people in business, so it is wise to be wary of individuals whose words and actions don’t match up. Nevertheless, I believe that most people presume the integrity of others until they are proven wrong.

You can build on that gratuitous good will by purposefully cultivating a reputation distinguished by truthfulness, sincerity, and authenticity. Trusted leaders don’t lie, don’t make promises they can’t keep, and don’t pretend to be something they are not.

**Equity**—“Give naught, get same. Give much, get same,” said Malcolm Forbes. The notion of giving to get is an ancient concept that appeals to our sense of balance and fairness. Employees expect fair pay for their labors. Customers expect quality and value for their money. Vendors expect timely compensation for their services. Give fairness—get trust.

Maintaining equity in your relationships with employees doesn’t end with giving them a paycheck and benefits. It also requires you to pay them “hidden paycheck” currencies, such as appreciation, security, challenge, and encouragement. If these important job outcomes are absent, employees will often find a way to even the score by withholding their best efforts.

**Civility**—Trust flourishes in an environment characterized by kindness, politeness, and respect. Why is it then that abusive bosses who embarrass employees, criticize customers, and vex vendors plague so many workplaces?

An inclusive, nurturing workplace encourages employees to develop and perform to their fullest potential. You should never tolerate gossiping, backbiting, and other destructive behaviors that diminish others. Everyone who comes in contact with your business should be treated with dignity, if you want him or her to trust you.

**Clarity**—Trust withers in an atmosphere of ambiguity. Clear and consistent communication is the key to open and honest relationships. Sending mixed messages to employees, customers, and vendors is a surefire way to confuse and alienate them. Not communicating at all with people who are important to your business encourages them to jump to their own conclusions.

People appreciate knowing the *why* as well as the *how* in company matters. Giving clear explanations for the reasons behind your decisions promotes trust because it invites people to

examine your motives. If you are reluctant to do that, perhaps your motives should be examined. When disputes and misunderstandings arise, strive to get all of the facts and hear all sides before forming a conclusion.

**Responsibility**—“Few things help an individual more than to place responsibility upon him, and to let him know you trust him,” said Booker T. Washington. Giving others responsibility demonstrates confidence in their abilities and invites them to reciprocate by trusting you. Call it delegation or empowerment, giving responsibility encourages accountability, which builds trust.

On the other hand, accepting responsibility when you make a mistake also engenders trust. Passing the buck or making excuses when things go wrong only serves to tarnish your credibility.

Albert Schweitzer, a brilliant philosopher, physician, musician, clergyman, missionary, and writer on theology once wrote, “Example is not the main thing in influencing others. It is the only thing.” Make integrity, equity, civility, clarity, and responsibility part of living your leadership legacy and you’ll be an example others will trust and follow.

## **Perceptivity—Demonstrating Emotional, Behavioral, and Relational Intelligence**

In addition to purpose and probity, your leadership legacy depends on your perceptivity—a mixture of wisdom, discernment, intuition, and empathy. Your perceptivity is determined by your ability to understand your own motives and manners and your adeptness at relating to the feelings and needs of the people you lead.

We all wear mental spectacles that affect how we see ourselves and the world around us. Our values, prejudices, experiences, and appetites shape our perception of reality. In addition, we each have our own way of dealing with people and circumstances. Problems arise when we are blind to the influence these factors have on how we see others and ourselves.

Think of perceptivity as a form of leadership intelligence. Obviously, business leaders need a certain amount of fact-based knowledge about their industry, their products, and their competition, as well as sound management practices, legal matters, and other types of business information. However, cognitive skills derived from intellect, education, and experience form just one dimension of leadership intelligence.

The Sommerville Study, a forty-year investigation of 450 boys

who grew up in Sommerville, Massachusetts, demonstrated the importance of non-cognitive skills to achieving success. Two-thirds of the boys were from welfare families, and one-third had IQs below ninety. Interestingly, formal education and IQ had little relation to how well the boys did at work or in the rest of their lives. What made the biggest difference was childhood abilities, such as being able to handle frustration, control emotions, and get along with other people.

In another study, eighty Ph.D.s in science were given a battery of personality tests and IQ tests in the 1950s, when they were graduate students at Berkeley. Forty years later, they were located and estimates were made of their success based on resumes, evaluations by experts in their own fields, and sources like American Men and Women of Science. Researchers found that social and emotional abilities were four times more important than IQ in determining the study subjects' professional success and prestige.

Leadership intelligence is a combination of emotional, behavioral, and relational intelligence. Each of these forms of perceptivity plays an important role in living your leadership legacy.

**Emotional Intelligence**—Daniel Goleman's book *Emotional Intelligence* defines this leadership trait as a combination of self-awareness, self-management, and self-confidence together with empathy and social skills.

Self-awareness is the reward you gain from an honest self-assessment of your strengths and limitations and a forthright acknowledgement of your emotional needs. Getting to know yourself better is a journey that involves leaving your emotional comfort zone, opening your eyes to new ideas, and exploring fresh social settings. Raising your self-awareness will help you see the world differently because you'll find it easier to understand others and you'll take yourself less seriously. Remember this proverb: "Blessed are those who can laugh at themselves, for they shall never cease to be amused."

Knowing yourself is the first step toward managing yourself. Without self-management, you are like a rudderless ship in a raging storm, at the mercy of whatever wind fills your emotional sails. In *Emotional Intelligence*, Goleman identifies what he calls the "master aptitude—resisting impulse." He contends that all emotions lead to an impulse to act. The advertising industry understands this fact all too well—it counts on you to buy



products based on messages that have tapped into your emotional circuitry. Learning to manage your emotional impulses, especially potentially destructive ones such as anger and fear, requires study and persistent effort, but it is an essential skill for the successful leader.

Self-management is an important building block for self-confidence, another element of emotional intelligence. Some might say that there are plenty of self-confident individuals who appear to have no clue about managing their emotions. But this is not true self-confidence—it is merely arrogance, a sure sign of emotional ignorance. Indeed, self-confidence is a quiet quality that is manifested through internal strength rather than external forcefulness. Humility is the hallmark of self-confidence. It enables you to empower others and accept constructive criticism.

Emotional intelligence about other people requires a willingness to lower your defenses and raise your empathy antenna in order to understand what others are feeling. In fact, that should be your first impulse when you interact with others, according to Stephen Covey in his book *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. Covey says that habit number five—seek first to understand, then to be understood—is the key to interpersonal communication. Listening is the most valuable tool for exercising emotional intelligence toward others. It demands that you devote time and attention, two commodities we tend to dole out with great discretion.

**Behavioral Intelligence**—In addition to exercising emotional intelligence, the perceptive leader understands how behavior styles influence our interaction with others and affect our preferences for various activities. All of us are driven by an internal guidance system that affects how we react in social settings, who we prefer as friends, what we do when we're under stress, and how we approach tasks.

Your behavior style determines your preference to: take charge or allow others to have control; dig into details or focus on the big picture; want to be center of attention or let others have the spotlight; love change or hate it. Understanding your own behavior style and how it is different from those around you is the basis for behavioral intelligence. As your understanding of behavior styles grows, you'll have greater success at building effective teams and generating workplace productivity.

Behavioral intelligence is particularly valuable in dealing with friction between you and someone else. Personality conflicts can arise when one aspect of a person's style bumps into an opposite

characteristic in your style. For example, if you are the quiet type, you might consider someone who is talkative and outgoing to be overbearing or insufferable. The danger with such thinking is that it leads to labeling people according to your own behavioral preferences, rather than seeing others as merely different from yourself.

There are several behavior style models that can be very useful in the workplace for helping leaders to better understand their team members and for promoting greater employee cooperation. The DISC behavior style model asserts that your behavior preferences are driven by two basic inclinations: your tendency to be either outgoing or reserved and your tendency to be either task-oriented or people-oriented. Each of the four major behavior styles in the DISC model is based on a combination of these two inclinations.

The *D* style of behavior is outgoing and task-oriented. People who fall into this category are dominant, driving doers, who like challenge, control, and choices. *D*'s want to be in charge and get the job done.

The *I* style of behavior is inspirational, influential, and impulsive. These outgoing, people-oriented individuals love the attention of others. They agree with Will Rogers' statement, "I never met a person I didn't like."

Steady, stable, and supportive—the reserved, people-oriented *S* behavior style is the quintessential team player. *S*'s love appreciation and approval. They thrive on routine, hate change, and strive to meet the needs of others.

Details, details, details. *C*'s love details. This reserved, task-oriented behavior style's favorite word is "why." Need something done correctly? Give it to a *C*, who lives by the motto, "Measure twice, cut once."

Each of us is a combination of these four basic styles. Typically, we have a dominant style and secondary style that influence our behavior the most. There are many DISC assessment surveys that can help you pinpoint your particular style. They can be very useful in helping you understand yourself better and providing insight into the behaviors of others.

**Relational Intelligence**—Marriott Corporation chairman J. W. Marriott, Jr. once said, "Motivate them, train them, care about them and make winners out of them. If we treat our employees correctly, they'll treat the customers right. And if customers are treated right, they'll come back."

That's all well and good, but there's more to the relationship

between a leader and his or her direct reports than that. In today's business environment of downsizing, mergers, and bankruptcy, the traditional bond of trust and loyalty between employees and their employer has been broken. As a result, employee expectations toward their employer have a new focus.

Beyond motivation, training and corporate caring, employees are looking for "equity," according to Richard Huseman, author of *Give to Get Leadership: The Secret of the Hidden Paycheck*. Now more than ever, Huseman writes, employees are comparing what they get out of a job with what they put into it and deciding whether it's an equitable exchange.

In return for hard work and loyalty, employees expect a decent paycheck, reasonable benefits, and a host of intangible "currencies," says Huseman. These currencies include: a sense of accomplishment, a feeling of importance to the organization, and recognition for effort and dedication—among many others. Huseman contends that these psychological currencies make up the "hidden paycheck" and are just as important to employees as the money and benefits they receive.

Furthermore, the hidden paycheck has to be paid by a particular person—the employee's immediate supervisor. Research has proven that the number one reason people say they quit their job is their relationship with their immediate supervisor. Likewise, the number one reason people say they feel positive about and remain at their job is their relationship with their immediate supervisor. A worker's regard for his or her immediate supervisor is the single most important factor in determining whether that employee is satisfied on the job.

Leaders at every level in an organization have a responsibility to develop their relational intelligence—the ability to discern the key rewards people want from a relationship. Developing your relational intelligence will enable you to pay the hidden paycheck that the people who work for you want and expect.

Teddy Roosevelt once said, "The most important single ingredient in the formula of success is knowing how to get along with people." Master the art of leadership intelligence and you'll live a leadership legacy that others will want to emulate.

### **Positivity—Projecting a Positive Point of View**

When I was a child, one of my favorite stories was "The Little Steam Engine." Allegedly, after each of the umpteen times I heard the story, I used to act like the Little Steam Engine and chug around the house, saying, "I think I can. I think I can. I think I can."

This account was related to me by my mother—so it may be somewhat exaggerated for the sake of cuteness.

“The Little Steam Engine” was my first encounter with literature devoted to promoting a positive mental attitude. Although I haven’t done any “chugging” since I graduated from college, I still think of that story whenever I’m faced with a difficult situation or daunting task.

“Your attitude, not your aptitude, will determine your altitude,” says Zig Ziglar. A leader who is passionate about producing quality products and services, inspiring employees, and satisfying customers will portray that passion through positive words and behaviors. How high do you want to fly? What kind of leadership legacy do you want to live? In large measure, your future is in your hands—or more accurately—in your mind. In addition to purpose, probity, and perceptivity, a positive attitude will help you carve your niche as a leadership legend.

Developing and maintaining a positive mental attitude (or PMA, as it is often called in personal-development lingo) has always been a secret for achieving success in life. In the book of Psalms, the Bible reminds us, “This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.” In fact, a PMA precedes success, rather than follows it. Popular author and speaker Earl Nightingale once said, “Meeting a successful, happy person, people frequently make the mistake of saying, ‘I’d be happy too, if I had what he’s got.’ It’s perhaps natural to think his attitude is the result of his success, but just the reverse is true.”

Nightingale asserts that we attract the kind of life that matches our outlook on life. Before we can achieve something, he says, we must first become the kind of person that “something” would naturally belong to. American psychologist and philosopher William James wrote, “The greatest discovery of my generation is that people can alter their lives by altering their attitudes of mind.” There are four basic ingredients for a positive mental attitude that will energize your leadership legacy.

**Cheerfulness**—My friend LeRoy Ober is ninety-eight years old. I have never met a person—of any age—filled with more vigor and joy than LeRoy. He is a lightening bolt of positive energy that illuminates a room. His dynamic, exuberant attitude, which springs from a life grounded in faith, optimism, and gratitude, is absolutely infectious. Spend two minutes with LeRoy and you’ll have a smile plastered on your face for the rest of the day.

**Confidence**—In his book *Working with Emotional Intelligence*, Daniel Goleman says people with self-confidence “believe

themselves to be catalysts, movers, and initiators, and feel that their abilities stack up favorably in comparison to others.'” This strong sense of one’s self worth and capabilities creates a presence that others perceive as a positive force that promotes productivity.

**Enthusiasm**—Norman Vincent Peale called enthusiasm “fire under control.” He said it “spells the difference between mediocrity and accomplishment.” Enthusiasm is the blaze in the boiler that generates the power of positive thinking. A positive mental attitude fueled by enthusiasm sees obstacles as stepping-stones. Contagious enthusiasm enables individuals and teams to overcome perceived limitations and vault to new levels of achievement.

**Expectancy**—There is no drama more meaningful than the birth of a baby. For nine months parents, family, and friends look forward to the day when a new life will add a chapter to the chronicle of humanity. That same sense of expectancy can be cultivated and applied to life in general. With each sunrise you can choose to look forward to a day that is pregnant with possibility. If you expect each day to deliver golden opportunities to your doorstep, you are more likely to discover special blessings that might otherwise escape your attention.

How do you develop a positive mental attitude? Work at it. Like anything of true value, a PMA isn’t something you find under a rock. You have to forge one with purposefulness and perseverance.

**Adopt the Semblance of Success**—“Assume a virtue, if you have it not,” says the lead character in Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*. Not that Hamlet’s fate is one you’d want to emulate, but the principle he articulates is sound. Think about a leader whose attitude you admire. Assume the attitude that leader would exhibit if he or she were leading your group. Simulating the positive outlook and demeanor of a person you esteem will help you make those habits part of your leadership style.

**Spread Smiles Freely**—Let your face lead the way and your attitude will follow. A smile is a carnation in the buttonhole of life—not to mention the most inexpensive way there is to improve your looks.

**Think Affirming Thoughts**—Tune in to your internal dialogue and check it out. Nip negative thoughts in the bud and replace them with positive affirmations. Try writing down some confidence-building, self-motivating assertions and keep them in view throughout the day. Pop one in your mouth whenever you taste a

sour thought coming on.

**Conduct Reality Checks**—Hold your internal dialogue to a ruthless standard of accuracy. Make sure that what you're telling yourself is really true before you accept it. Watch out for absolutes like *always* and *never*. Replace thoughts such as *No one appreciates what I do* with more accurate statements, such as *Sometimes my efforts appear to go unnoticed, but my friends and colleagues know I do quality work*.

**Speak Words of Positivity**—In his book *Love and Profit: The Art of Caring Leadership*, James Autry asserts the power of positive comments on the people you work with. "In the workplace, words are our most frequent tool," he writes, "and the leader's words can work magic, can change the environment, the work and the morale, and can create a whole new way of thinking." Upbeat, caring, and encouraging words promote enthusiasm, initiative, and loyalty among your people.

**Show An Interest in Others**—Treat every person with whom you come in contact as the most important person on the planet at that moment. "You can make more friends in two months by becoming interested in other people than you can in two years by trying to get other people interested in you," wrote Dale Carnegie. Although your goal is not necessarily to make friends with your staff, show a genuine concern for their lives and give them the full measure of your attention when you are interacting with them.

**Celebrate Regularly**—Why do people look forward to office parties with such eagerness? I believe it's because they get a chance to share a spirit of celebration, joy, and camaraderie that makes a department of co-workers seem more like a family. Unfortunately, we often relegate celebration to employee birthday luncheons and company picnics, rather than looking for opportunities to kick up our heels on a regular basis. Staff meetings are excellent occasions for recognizing and showing appreciation for attitudes and behaviors that build team spirit. The book *1001 Ways to Reward Employees* by Bob Nelson is an excellent resource for finding ways to celebrate accomplishments large and small.

Positivity will make a good impression on others, motivate the people you lead, and metamorphose your life into a monument to success and satisfaction. Start by taking a lesson from the Little Steam Engine. Tell yourself *I think I can. I think I can. I think I can*—until you do.

**Perseverance—Making the Most of Misfortune and Conflict**

In 1914 British explorer Ernest Henry Shackleton set out by ship for Antarctica, hoping to cross the continent on foot. He and his men never made it. Shackleton's ship, *Endurance*, became stuck in the ice, trapping him and his crew for months. Little did he know how appropriate his ship's name would become.

As conditions worsened, the ice began to shift, crushing the ship's hull. Ultimately, the ship sank, stranding Shackleton and his crew of twenty-seven more than 1,200 miles from civilization, drifting on ice floes with limited provisions. Undaunted, Shackleton led his crew to a small island using barely seaworthy lifeboats.

After setting up a makeshift camp, Shackleton decided to split the group. Leaving some of the crew on the island with their limited provisions, Shackleton and a few men took a rickety lifeboat and sailed 800 miles to a whaling station in South Georgia, a British-administered island in the southern Atlantic Ocean east of Cape Horn.

Immediately after arriving, Shackleton chartered another ship and returned to rescue his remaining crew. Later, he went on to lead other expeditions to Antarctica.

Purpose, probity, perceptivity, and positivity are four of the five pillars upon which your leadership legacy will rest. The final pillar is perhaps the most difficult to realize. Perseverance presumes the presence of difficulty, distress, or disaster. Consequently, it is a quality you probably admire in others, but it is one you might wish you didn't have to demonstrate yourself. Nevertheless, perseverance is a vital leadership characteristic and it could make a life-or-death difference to your business when adversity strikes.

In their book *Shackleton's Way: Leadership Lessons From the Great Antarctic Explorer*, Margot Morrell and Stephanie Capparell offer lessons from Shackleton's exploits. Here are some leadership steps Shackleton followed in his confrontation with crisis:

- Immediately talk to your staff and offer a plan of action.
- Ask for everyone's support and express confidence in a positive outcome.
- Give your staff an occasional reality check, because eventually people will start to treat a crisis situation as business as usual and lose their focus.
- Keep malcontents close to you and win their support.
- Use humor and other diversions to relieve tension.
- Let all the people involved in a crisis participate in the

solution.

Naturally, it's a good idea to think ahead as much as possible. Having a crisis management plan makes sense for businesses of all sizes. To the best of your abilities, consider potential crises and formulate a strategic response for each. Your plan should provide clear instructions to all who could be affected by the crisis and it should take into account actual and potential consequences. It should also provide for the continuity of business operations during and immediately after the crisis.

Of course, not every challenge is a crisis. Sometimes you must persevere through rather mundane, yet burdensome conflicts that involve inappropriate behavior by an employee. Here are some strategies for keeping a cool head when confrontations erupt.

**Don't overreact.** Anger is a wind that blows out the lamp of the mind. A fit of temporary insanity will only lead to embarrassment and regret. Instead, be patient and empathetic—and build a reservoir of good will with the people who will be involved in finding a solution to the problem.

**Get all the facts.** There are always two sides to a story. When all parties have had their say, their willingness to listen and consider other perspectives increases. Again, as Stephen Covey says, "Seek first to understand and then to be understood."

**Give yourself time to think about it.** Sleep on it whenever possible. You are less likely to make a rash comment or reckless decision if you give yourself a timeout. You can see much better when the smoke of passion has cleared.

**Seek wise counsel.** If time allows, run the situation by a trusted mentor. An objective viewpoint often yields options you might otherwise overlook. In addition, talking it over gives you the opportunity to think out loud as you formulate a response.

**Communicate your concerns clearly.** When a conflict arises, be careful to criticize the behavior rather than the person. Give specific reasons why the behavior is unacceptable and describe how it is affecting the workplace.

**Go for win-win.** Strive for a resolution to the conflict that all parties can accept as fair and reasonable. This approach is harder than simply laying down the law, but it will teach others to consider needs beyond their own in a dispute. Specify a precise set of actions to be carried out. Put it in writing and get the employee to sign it.

**Explain the consequences if the unacceptable behavior doesn't change.** Put that in writing, too. Formal reprimands, demotions,



reductions in pay, and other such measures may motivate a recalcitrant to get with the program. Ultimately, giving an employee the choice of resignation or dismissal may be the only course of action. If so, be fair, compassionate, and decisive.

“In calm water every ship has a good captain,” says a Swedish proverb. Ernest Shackleton proved that the true test of a leader comes when a vessel sails into dire straits. When the storms of adversity blow through your business or when employee problems rock your boat, remember the strategies above and you’ll be able to persevere as you navigate to calmer seas.

Are you living a leadership legacy that will leave a lasting imprint on your business and the lives of the people with whom you work? By intentionally cultivating the qualities of purpose, probity, perceptivity, positivity, and perseverance, you will develop a reputation as a leadership legend—rather than a double S-O-B.

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Mark Fulton helps companies transform their managers into leaders. Through his coaching, columns, seminars, and speeches, Mark helps business people optimize the single most important factor in boosting workplace productivity and profitability: relationships. Mark's coaching practice, Compass Leadership Coaching, develops dynamic leaders who know how to energize and engage employees through powerful relationships. Mark's coaching clients and seminar attendees learn vital thinking, communication and behavior skills that will take them to the top of their field.



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# CHAPTER FOUR

## Five Qualities That Built a \$4 Billion Business Beverly A. Holmes

What kind of leader does it take to build a four-billion-dollar business without a budget? This is the story of five leadership qualities that led me to create a business within one of the largest financial services companies in the United States.

What are these five qualities? The first is vision. Having a vision enables the leader to conceptualize and demonstrate what is possible. In their book *The Leadership Challenge*, Kouzes and Posner state, “The dream or vision is the force that invents the future.”

The second quality is passion. A genuine passion for a positive idea or undertaking is the foundation on which vibrant and creative cultures are built. Passion is the emotional drive to overcome all obstacles to reach one’s goal—without it nothing happens.

The third is courage. *Webster’s New World Dictionary* describes courage as the “attitude of facing and dealing with anything recognized as difficult.” It takes courage to do something that hasn’t been done before. It takes courage to trust your instincts—that you are on the right path—and it takes courage to change course when you must.

The fourth quality is focus. Focus eliminates distractions and enables a leader to stay the course to reach the desired end result.

The fifth quality is determination. Determination is being resolute, firm with a continuous and patient effort to succeed. It is the “never give up, never give in until it’s finished” attitude.

These five leadership qualities have guided my thinking, my goal setting and my actions through most of my youth and adult years. They were the reason for my success in the private sector. They continue to guide me in my current work at MassMutual Financial Group, a Fortune 100 financial services organization, where I began as a superintendent of sales in 1983.

In 1999, I suggested to MassMutual Financial Group that they support my request to take the retirement services division into a new market segment—to create a new venture within the retirement services traditional business environment. They gave me the go-ahead but without allocating additional capital, resources and with reduced staffing. However, my passion to

succeed did not view these challenges as impediments.

This is the story of that incredible journey. There was a clear path leading the way to creating a successful business within this financial services giant, but it wasn't without obstacles. It takes a special set of leadership skills to build a successful business under extraordinary circumstances. Within five years, this new business, the TPA Alliance Business, held more than four billion dollars in assets under management. I now know how achieving that goal was possible. It was the five key attributes I had held to all of my life: vision, passion courage, focus, and determination.

## **The right time**

Companies in the financial services industry are among the least likely to accept radical change or to change anything about their business model quickly, and with good reason—they have a serious obligation to their customers. So change doesn't come without effort.

There are numerous industry organizations that watch and maintain records on financial institutions, their performance, and practices. Poor performance at any level can become news very quickly, and it's difficult for a company to recover public confidence from that kind of news. Therefore, caution is most often the climate within financial services companies.

Despite this industry's reluctance, the stage was being set for change at MassMutual Financial Group. There was a new CEO on board asking the leadership to develop new ways to grow the business, to experiment, and to take risks. He recognized that without positive change, innovative thinking, and new products and services, the company would not be positioned to compete in the ever-changing global marketplace. The message of change was clear and was slowly seeping into this very conservative culture and became the driving force behind the CEO's new growth strategies for the company.

I welcomed the new philosophy wholeheartedly because I had identified an untapped market for MassMutual. The retirement services division was deeply anchored in, and very successful providing services through their core business model that focused on large institutional companies. However, the company's major distribution channel's market was small businesses. The product we offered wasn't competitive with products offered by other companies for that market segment. We all struggled with what to do about the lack of a marketable product. We had an effective distribution channel and a market opportunity but no product to

meet the retirement plan needs of the distribution channel's customers. The time was ripe for change.

## **The right idea—selling the vision**

As I developed my recommendation for change, I had to make it clear that I wasn't suggesting change for change's sake, to make a name for myself, or to promote myself. My proposal was right for our company. MassMutual is a highly successful financial services company. Its Retirement Services division was successful selling 401(k) retirement plans to their primary market segment—large institutional accounts—through a highly trained sales organization. This was their “sweet spot,” where large plan sales translated into attractive profit margins. Knowing where your profitable business comes from is one of the most important factors to your success.

I knew, however, there was a growth opportunity in the \$340 billion small to mid-sized business market. Capturing just a small portion of that market would translate into new revenue and assets for the company.

Based on the research, I found there were risks in other companies we didn't have. One of the most common failures in any business is distribution. Having a good product to sell is one thing, having a way to sell it is another. We had a very loyal distribution channel that knew their customers' retirement services needs, all I had to do was listen to them.

In discussions with the distribution channel and my sales team, it was very clear we needed a competitive, easy-to-sell product designed specifically for the small-business market.

I leveraged my relationship with key distribution channel representatives and engaged them to help design the product. They were very willing to help design a product they needed for prospects and customers. Having them help in the design was a novel idea as it built in their ownership early in the process.

To reduce product cost, the plan called for outsourcing two parts of the program traditionally performed internally by MassMutual—the compliance work and customer relationship management. The employee benefits field, specifically the retirement plan industry, is very complex and ever changing. The compliance component is the most arduous.

So who better to outsource the work to than companies where compliance and customer relationship management were core business services—third-party administrators (TPAs). Reimbursing the TPA businesses would be less costly than having

MassMutual provide the services internally.

And there was an added bonus, the TPAs were also a distribution channel. They had many relationships with sales groups, brokers, and financial advisors, who bring customers to them on a regular basis. It was advantageous to the TPAs to have a relationship with a quality company offering a product they could introduce and market to their many relationships. In addition to compliance work, they had an incentive to sell the product. So in reality, we had three distribution channels to market our new product and services: the TPAs, our distribution channel, and my sales people who educate and assist each channel with selling. Not a bad scenario when you are looking for as many ways as possible to sell your idea.

Because we were not selling into the small- and mid-sized markets at the time, doing something different was better than doing nothing. The answer seemed so clear and so obvious to me. I wasn't asking for radical change; I was simply asking that we leverage the resources MassMutual already had in place.

When I suggested adding the new line of business to my colleagues, it was immediately apparent they were not going to embrace the idea with enthusiasm. Even with the right idea at the right time, it would take my unwavering commitment to the vision and the outpouring of my passion to gain their support.

## **The right path**

For some, it may be hard to believe that someone could have such a focused passion for working in the retirement services segment of the financial services industry. From the moment I accepted the job at MassMutual, I knew I was the right person in the right place.

## **Roots of courage**

My grandfather used to encourage me and tell me I was a very courageous child. That stuck with me and became a very important part of who I am. I can still hear my grandfather's words when I am faced with a difficult situation. His words of encouragement have kept me on the right path, never giving up, and never giving in. To be courageous meant I could face any situation with confidence and a spirit of determination.

I knew early on that I was a leader. When given a leadership role as a YWCA teen, I felt very motivated and gratified when I was inspiring others to join in and experience new adventures.

## **Roots of passion**

My first introduction to financial services was my first real job after college. Investors Diversified Services, a financial services sales organization, was the door opener to an interesting new world for me. To qualify as a financial advisor, I passed several industry exams that prepared me to sell annuities, mutual funds, and life insurance. To my surprise, I enjoyed the work. I liked building relationships with people and helping them meet their financial security goals.

The position was commission-only, and it was really difficult to maintain a steady income. Being a woman and a woman of color in a white male dominated industry did not help either. My customers were all women as at that time a male working with a female financial advisor was rare. So I decided to move on, knowing that I would eventually return to the financial services industry.

## **Roots of focus**

In my next position working with the consulting firm, Professional Management Services—Record Center West, I went on client calls with other consultants as part of my on-going training. We met with groups of radiologists to review their business activities and their retirement plan. The retirement plan interested me a great deal, with its complexities. Most intriguing was the vast amount of assets that accumulated over time in the plan. I was fascinated by the consultant's grasp and understanding of pension law and the investment strategies applied to each radiologist group retirement plan that I wanted to know more about the field and the market opportunities. It was as if I had found what everyone looks for in life—a place, a future. I knew profoundly that working in the retirement services business was where I was meant to be.

I needed to expand my knowledge and find a company where I could specialize. I left the consulting firm and moved to Aetna Life and Casualty where I worked for approximately five years, totally focused on retirement plan products, plan administration, and sales support.

## **Roots of determination**

Feeling experienced and ready to move forward toward my goals, I found a position at MassMutual as superintendent of sales. I went to the interview, knowing that as a woman of color in a male-dominated industry I clearly had a major obstacle to



overcome. During the interview I was determined to sell myself as a competent person who could make a significant contribution to the company. The interview was challenging. When I left MassMutual, I didn't think I had the job, but I really wanted that position. The next day, rather than sending the traditional thank-you, I put together a customized thank-you package, a "marketing Beverly" package, that included a compendium of my key attributes and strengths along with a specially designed thank-you letter. Within twenty-four hours after mailing my thank-you package I had an offer. I knew I was in the right place!

In my first position at MassMutual, I trained sales people on how to offer retirement plan products and services to their customers. I was responsible for the Mid-West region of the country. It was an ideal position allowing me to travel, share my knowledge, use my sales experience, and break a tradition, as I believed I was the first person of color to hold such a position at MassMutual. And the retirement services division was a core business within MassMutual—exactly what I was looking for.

Where did the passion come from? It came from deep down within me and it was more than just my focus on my professional goals. I've always risen to challenges that have been presented to me, whether it was excelling at academics (because I've never been athletic), or leading a delegation of people to foreign lands, or presenting and selling my ideas in the corporate world, I would accomplish them all with intense emotional drive and a deep feeling of commitment and determination.

## **Roots of vision**

I cannot allow obstacles to prevent me from moving along my true course in life. I believe strongly in setting goals. When I establish goals I find that what I need to accomplish the goal comes to me; whether it is a person providing a solution or giving guidance, or a set of circumstances positioning me in the right place at the right time, or a relationship that opens the doors to an opportunity. It has always been about the goal and the magic that follows. Goals feed my passion and my drive to persevere until the vision is realized.

By the time I was certain my vision was right, I was already experiencing the feeling of accomplishment you get when you reach your desired destination. In my mind, I had already designed the product, engaged the distribution channel, the third-party administrators, and our sales team. What I needed to do next was get everyone else on board with the idea. That included

convincing my colleagues.

## **The right relationships**

One of the most critical steps to selling my idea to management was cultivating strategic relationships with people who could be helpful to me and the business. Many times it isn't the most powerful people who make the best allies. Some say you need to know those at the top, which I am sure, can be very helpful. However, I believe it is the people who on a day-to-day basis deal with the intricacies of the business who have the answers and who will share and help you accomplish a goal. These are the people, from my perspective, who are the most valuable. So I identified two groups. The first group consisted of four people: one from legal, one from financial, one from product development, and one from technology. These were the people I could count on to support my plan.

The second group was made up of three individuals who reported to the executive vice president, the person I needed to convince to allow me to start the new business. This group collectively and individually was the most skeptical and offered the biggest challenge. To gain their endorsement I had to demonstrate to them how my plan met our growth targets and supported the division's strategy for increasing revenue. To accomplish my goal I used the divide-and-conquer strategy and met with each one separately at dinner or in a private meeting.

For me the business strategy was sound and obvious. I thought, "How could anyone not see the value and opportunity?" To them I asked, "Where do you think the future growth of the retirement services business is going to be?"

I asked many questions, all the time respecting their experience and their background and letting them know I valued their opinion and input. My goal was to find out how comfortable each felt about doing something new and different. I needed to build a bridge and engage each to take an active part in the idea. I wanted them to have a little "skin in the game." Better to have them with me versus against me, and if they couldn't be with me, I'd accept neutrality.

I explained that the idea was not about me, it was about an opportunity, about trying something new, taking a risk and not just doing something, but doing the right thing to grow the retirement services business at MassMutual.

"This business concept is not revolutionary; anyone could have come up with this idea. I just happened to be looking for a product

solution for the distribution channel, and I believe this solution is a very good one. All I want to do is leverage our existing capabilities to deliver a product and services to a robust distribution channel and I am asking for your support to help me implement the plan. Based on your experiences and background, you have accomplished many creative business enterprises in your past; this one has merit and deserves your support.”

They weren't buying my presentation; they were adamant—I was wrong and the small-business market was not the panacea I believed it to be.

“We have the core capabilities and competencies we need to implement this strategy. We already have the distribution channel. They are eager to have a MassMutual product they can sell and willing to partner with us. They also have the customer base and market focus. We just need to provide the product and services.” My position was we should take the risk and meet the challenge. “Let's use our core competencies to develop competitive retirement plan products and services for the small to mid-size business market and build our customer base.”

“Well, we can't do that. Our core market is the large business market, the institutional market. We need to focus our resources and attention on continually growing our core products and services,” was the common response.

“I know, I know and I do understand your reluctance to put resources to a new endeavor,” was my reply, “but I am sure it will work. Would you support me if I bring my new business idea to our executive vice president? My idea would not disturb the core market or take away from our efforts as a division. We would be adding to what we do so well and expanding our business into new markets while building assets.”

As I developed my plan to sell the concept, I continued to look for ways to mobilize their support. I listened and relied on their expertise, and asked their opinion on important matters. But they just could not bring themselves to accept my point of view. I needed to have them as allies; but I could not give up or give in to their skepticism.

After it was apparent I could do no more to gain 100 percent of their support, I asked each person individually whether they could support me on any basis or aspect of my business idea. There was no commitment forthcoming, avoidance and silence was my answer. I was prepared for that reaction and moved forward to set up a meeting with the decision-maker to explain my idea and obtain his approval to implement it. Even though my colleagues

were still skeptical and holding back their support, I could not waiver, I could not be afraid, I could only hope that they would not voice their objections too loudly in the meeting. I would pray for their silent non-commitment. What I decided is that it was more important to maintain a good working relationship with my colleagues even if I could not obtain their agreement.

## **Selling the right idea to management**

Preparing for the meeting, I knew the executive vice president was the one to convince—he was the one who would ask the toughest questions. My three colleagues, the four individuals who helped me design the product and services, and my key staff, which included someone I had hired away from a competitor to work with me on the new idea, all attended the meeting. I presented the problem and the solution.

He listened and looked to others for input. What he received from my colleagues was mixed conversation both pro and con. What he heard from the four specialists was positive commentary.

He asked me, “Beverly how would you accomplish this plan of yours?”

I responded, “My idea is not to do everything ourselves. It is to outsource the most critical services.”

“Who would you outsource to?” he questioned.

“Since we would be selling to the small-business market, I’d outsource to a small group of elite TPAs. TPAs that already provide compliance services to businesses in this market segment. They could also market and sell the product to other distribution channel relationships they have,” I responded.

“I understand at least one other company has done well in this market,” he noted.

“Yes, it’s a Canadian based company with impressive sales results and positive asset growth year over year,” I encouraged.

After answering all of his questions I felt a need to continue my presentation, although I had made all my points more than once. I tried to elicit non-damaging input from the skeptics, at least to demonstrate that I had spoken with them, to no avail. Their guarded comments were not at all helpful with statements like, “it could work if—” or, “it’s a good idea but—”

To my dismay and surprise, after laying out all the facts, the meeting ended without a pro or con decision from the decision-maker. He told me I had more work to do. I was terribly disappointed, it was not an outcome I was prepared to receive.

Remember, I had already visualized the end result in my mind we had already created the business, it was flourishing, and the goal had been accomplished.

The person I had hired away from a competitor looked shaken and questioned whether he had made the right decision to come work for me.

“Please, relax, don’t worry, we are not giving up I just need some time to think,” I said.

Although, I did not know what I was going to do at that time, I couldn’t let him know that I, too, was disappointed. Surprisingly, the let down feeling only lasted a fleeting moment because a few minutes later I was working on my comeback strategy. I just couldn’t take no for an answer. Back in my office, I immediately set up a meeting for the following morning with the decision-maker.

“We didn’t come out of the meeting with a decision, and I really need to talk with you one-on-one. I want to explain my rationale and perhaps clear up any confusion, misinformation, or negative perceptions.”

My next call was to our product development person, she was a CPA and had helped me develop the plan, “Can you be available tomorrow at ten o’clock?” I asked. The executive vice president was also a CPA and I needed someone who could speak his language. I told the product development person I was meeting again with the decision-maker to obtain a go or no-go decision and I knew he would want to discuss the financials.

The next morning when I walked into his office for the meeting, I wasn’t thinking about explaining financials, or benefits, or reasons why. Instead, my only thought was to come out of his office with a positive answer—that’s it.

I positioned myself in a chair across the desk from him, looked him in the eye, and said, “You *have* to let me do this.”

He looked back at me and said, “You really believe this will work?”

“Yes, I do, this will work,” I said. “And if it doesn’t work, we will have learned something. We will have tried something new and experienced a different way of carrying out our business. And what’s wrong with that, especially when the risk is small?”

“The financials, the sales plan seems pretty aggressive. Do you really believe you can obtain these results?” he asked.

I replied, “I have had actuarial, our legal staff, our technology people, our product development person who, as you know, is a CPA and my new hire who brings market knowledge, all work

together to help develop the business plan. I feel pretty confident with the numbers. The CPA worked with me on this from the very beginning. She is available to talk with you about the details.”

So he called her and said, “I’m looking at these projections; how did you come up with the numbers?”

She told him, “I worked with actuarial and we took the core business, removed services and resources not applicable to the new product, made some pretty conservative assumptions, incorporated the market research data, and projected, based on product design and market need, the sales projections you see. I’m as comfortable as I can be with the numbers.” Her responses were very logical but he wanted more and continued to ask very relevant questions that she answered with confidence.

He hung up the phone and we sat very quietly for a brief moment. I looked directly at him to get some sign of what he was thinking.

Then he said to me, “You know, I remember my wife worked at a company. She had an idea she was passionate about and they didn’t support her. She eventually quit. I remember how that was for her.” I stayed attentive, but silent.

“Beverly, you really believe you can do this?”

“Yes, I do,” I said.

“Okay I want you to reduce expenses, which may require you to terminate two of your sales people and two of your internal staff, and your sales goal is \$100 million.”

This wasn’t a capricious request. As a CPA, he knew that to have a successful operation expenses had to be kept low and managed, the cost of sales had to be controlled, and growth projections needed to be met. He understood the numbers and he believed what he was asking for was not unrealistic.

At the time, I didn’t think about how cutting four people would affect us, I said, “Thank you, thank you. I will make it work.”

I walked out—on clouds. Then my feet hit the ground as the realization of what he said sunk in. It’s what they call a “big gulp moment,” and I thought, “Oh my God, I have to let four people go!” We would be down four people with no increased budget, starting a new business with a first year sales goal of \$100 million—a formidable task to say the least. The first year would include establishing and building TPA relationships, sales training, and product rollout.

The first person I called was my new hire, the person who the day before thought he was out of a job. Much of our success depended on him and his expertise in the TPA market. He had to

cultivate and bring the targeted TPAs into an alliance partnership with MassMutual. I told him, “We got the okay, now we have to deliver. It’s your opportunity to make what we all believe in happen.”

## **Running the business right**

All of the ingredients came into place. We had an agreed upon business plan, a product and service that was competitive and in demand, multiple distribution channels and the sales people to work with the channels. We scheduled meetings with every distributor of retirement products. We were ready to go. And, by the way, I also reduced my sales staff by two and my internal staff by one.

That year was phenomenal. As in any small business, we were responsible for everything. When we had to meet deadlines for sales meetings, my entire staff had to do the most mundane tasks as well as the most technical presentations. Everyone on the team understood the importance of achieving our goal of \$100 million. Everyone who was associated with the program was so passionate about it that every time we sold a plan, it was like a halleluiah day. In that first year, we sold \$204 million of business, exceeding our first-year goal by \$104 million.

The second year, 2001, with no increase in our budget, our goal increased significantly—to \$350 million—a tremendous jump. I didn’t even blink. Again, we achieved our sales goal, ending the year at \$480 million in sales. The company began to take notice and started to add resources— a defining moment—recognizing us as a viable business. The next year’s goal was \$650 million. We ended the year with \$651 million in sales.

In 2002, we organized into a structured business with our own profit and loss (P and L) accountabilities. We had truly arrived, but it also increased pressure to build a sustainable business. Again, we exceeded our goal of \$750 million by selling \$754 million of retirement plan products and services. Once we had our own P and L, we began to transform, functioning as a company within the larger company. We grew from twenty people to more than seventy-five in a very short period of time.

When leading a sales focused business, you’re always gulping, always stressing, and very dependent upon your distribution channel, not knowing if you’re going to reach your goals. And each year as we moved forward with higher and higher goals, we pushed ourselves to the limit; we pushed our distributors just as hard. Is this going to work? Are we going to be successful? The

adrenaline ran high the entire year. We had experienced, early on, great success. We never thought about failure, even though each year it got harder and harder to deliver the numbers. But our eyes were always on the prize and failure was not an option.

I didn't think about success in the traditional sense. Although the promotions came, the true mark of success for me was growing the business, leading, and motivating the people in the business. The respect I earned, especially from those who had been so skeptical in the beginning, was an acknowledgement that the business strategy truly worked. Working with a vibrant and creative culture of people who worked together and created magic was the most gratifying aspect of the entire experience.

## **Creating a vibrant and creative culture**

Everyone in the organization exhibited his or her own version of passion. What we were doing was new, exciting, and rewarding. Many of the people had worked for me for many years. They had supported the distribution channel with products they couldn't sell. They had persevered and all the while I kept telling them not to give up, that we would have a competitive product one day. I knew and believed we would all be successful. They stuck with me and my words rang true as they all experienced the joy and excitement of winning.

Everyone knew our success was all about our staying focused and working together toward the same goal. We had yearly themes reinforcing the vision. We knew that if it was going to be, it was up to each one of us to make it happen.

Many businesses have a vertical hierarchical structure and work environment. I promoted an inclusive, collaborative environment where everyone had the opportunity to contribute. I talked with everyone. I'd ask, "What do you think about how we are servicing our customers? What would you do differently? How would you solve this problem? I want your ideas." When their solutions were well thought out and made sense, I would say "Wonderful! Do it!"

How many companies can you find where an employee is given that level of autonomy?

I walked and talked my vision to my people on a regular basis, living and sharing my passion to accomplish the goals, so we were as one with our direction. As we grew, we infused new people into our "can do" business culture. When people did not work well in the culture and couldn't adapt, they didn't stay. The culture was so strong, people had to embrace it to become part of the team to



be successful. Exposing my people to the distribution channels, the TPAs, our sales people, and our customers gave them a sense of ownership, evoked a commitment to excellence and service, and helped them adapt to this dynamic, hard driving business.

Looking back, I think about how we had little or no financial resources; sometimes the most basic tools were missing. However, the difficulties and the hard work. I believe if you have the vision, courage, passion, focus, and determination, and have employees who find great joy in taking the ride with you, you can overcome obstacles and do just about anything.

I am grateful for one great outcome, I learned that starting a business within a corporation surrounded by limitations is really no different from starting a business outside, on your own. You can establish a culture of creativity in any environment.

I've seen large sums of money invested in new ventures that eventually failed. I sometimes wonder what effect having a committed capital investment would have had on us. Would we have been as passionate, as proactive? Would we have been over-comers and achievers? I don't know. I do know that *not* having the capital made us a stronger and a much more resourceful group.

When we needed marketing, my people would say to me, "The marketing group doesn't have the budget for us."

I'd tell them not to go to management but to find someone in the marketing department with whom they could cultivate a relationship, someone who would help us out. "Go talk to that person. I believe you'll be successful."

They would look a little worried. "Are you sure they won't get upset?"

"I'll support you," I replied. "Someone will do what you ask if you ask in the right way."

Down in the organization, people worked well together. Management recognized that what we were accomplishing was definitely outside the norm. I've always told my people that there are no boundaries, only the ones you make yourself. "You have goals to accomplish, be creative, move mountains, and do the right thing."

## **The right people**

One critically important aspect of the environment at MassMutual is the emphasis they place on developing their people. The pay is competitive and we hire competent people. We had a wealth of highly competent, creative people who were

capable of managing around the status quo.

We took the people who were competent and self-assured, but who were also supporters of the status quo then matched them up with the non-traditional performer who was creative and unafraid to try a new idea or a new approach to an old problem. The combination was stimulating and intriguing. When they learned to respect each other's style and combine their efforts for the greater good, they created a highly productive environment.

Most of the people came into our group from other divisions in the company. The one person I needed to hire from outside would bring experience in the small-business market—someone who knew how to work with distribution channels. I found this person working for a competitor. He was smart, a very good negotiator and had the communication style that we needed for the job: outspoken, assertive, and articulate.

There was one problem—I was told we couldn't hire him. He was from Canada and didn't have a green card, clearly an obstacle to overcome. I absolutely had to have this person to help me build the business so I persuaded the company to liberalize their position. Our smart legal staff supported me and worked the issues. I hired the person. It was the right decision at the right time. We needed to move forward quickly and he was ready, willing, and able.

## **The right plan**

One of the most difficult challenges a leader has when starting a business is staying focused and keeping the vision at the forefront of everyone's mind. The business plan is your reference, a template, a guide, and a tool for understanding why certain decisions were made. It is a living document that should change as your business develops. When used consistently, it will help you manage and grow your business.

I shared my business plan with my entire organization and anyone connected to our mission, giving everyone a clear picture and a clear path to the goals.

One of the most important components of the business plan is the financial plan. It is your road map and a tool that if properly prepared and followed, will be the main reason you stay in business. The plan is your best thinking at the time. If the assumptions hold and everything else lines up, you will meet your objectives. However, if the assumptions are off the mark, you will need to adjust and make changes. When something doesn't work, you change it.

The product discipline factor is a key component to any plan because it is so easy to become distracted. In sales, you're always concerned about making your numbers. It's tempting to disregard product pricing when you are faced with an opportunity and you need to make the sale, however, when the numbers don't line up with your value proposition, you have to ask, can you afford to take the risk?

A good business plan incorporates variables. We were never so focused that we weren't flexible. There were times that my pricing person felt that tweaking the price would assure our getting the business. He had to demonstrate the short and long-term financial impact to the business. Before I gave my okay, I'd always ask how sure he was about the numbers.

"I'm sure, Beverly I ran the numbers using different assumptions."

"You're absolutely sure."

"Yes, if we keep this business on the books for a standard period of time, we will be right where we should be, the margin will hold."

"Okay, do it."

Build your plan with flexibility, design it for growth; that will allow you to make some decisions that are outside of the plan parameters.

The sales business is dynamic. At its core is the art of meeting a customer's needs, which are never the same from one customer to another. Negotiation skills are a requirement because exception requests are not unusual.

A salesperson came to me very excited about a large prospect, he asked for a price exception he believed was needed to secure the sale. I replied, "Okay, so here's what we're going to do, if there is a loss because of wrong assumptions management will not be the sole loser. When our revenue is reduced, so will be your compensation." He decided to pursue other options.

People will make better business decisions when they examine the implications of their decisions. The business plan provides a foundation for keeping all decisions tied to the end goal. It helps everyone stay focused and disciplined.

## **What went wrong was all right**

In 2003, we had a \$650 million sales goal. We ended the year at \$420 million—\$230 million behind our goal. Because I was so accustomed to exceeding the goal every year, I was devastated.

In 2004, I ramped up the business to hit a \$700 million sales

goal and \$4 billion in total assets. We achieved \$625 million in sales and ended the year with \$4.1 billion in total assets under management—a major accomplishment considering the previous year's results. We were back on track, yet I couldn't reconcile the prior year's results and the feeling of deep disappointment.

That one year I failed to reach my sales goal resulted in one of the best leadership lessons of my career. Why? Because in previous years we were always triumphant..

I never thought about failing. That one experience was a wake up call and led me to examine what I did right and what I did wrong.

I realized that the rapid growth of my business required checks and balances. Externally, a constant review of the market place and the effects on the business and internally, managing the expectations of my management from a resource and product design perspective. Taking a more proactive approach to understand the positives and negatives of rapid business growth would have been beneficial. Because I was running a very lean operation, I had no second in command who could manage the business, and thus allow me to focus on moving the business to the next level. I found myself entangled trying to manage and lead at the same time; an impossible task. I became somewhat disconnected from my people and the distribution channel. Both had been keys to my success. Then there was the frequent product changes which priced the product out of its natural market—the small-business market. There seem to be no viable options to meet our target market's needs. In hindsight, I should have slowed the growth, addressed the infrastructure and adjusted my sales goals to reflect the market changes. However, these were the lessons to be learned from that experience. The lessons that transformed my thinking and prepared me for a new level of leadership.

I used all that I learned from 2003 to improve performance in 2004. Our renewed success was the result of improving the quality of personnel; hiring a second in command and reconnecting to the five leadership qualities that I always considered key to my success: vision, passion, courage, focus, and determination. Had we continued to be successful, would I have stopped to review my leadership in the changing business culture? Probably, at some point, but I must say that the experience of failure has a way of bringing very quickly to light what is truly important.

Building and running a business requires change focused

leadership. Remaining true to the five leadership qualities that positively influenced my life: vision, passion, courage, focus, and determination will ensure my future success. I know it is these qualities that will successfully guide me and place me on a path to embrace and conquer my next adventure.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Beverly A. Holmes leads ordinary people to reach extraordinary goals. Recently, she built a new, four-billion-dollar business within a Fortune 100 financial services company, overcoming obstacles and objections with courage, creativity, and determination.

As an advocate of economic development opportunities for women, Beverly speaks on leadership, business development and financial security, nationally and internationally. She has personally led delegations focused on business development to Asia, Eastern Europe and Africa. She also participated, by invitation, in the Middle East, North African Women Business Leaders Summit in Tunis, Tunisia and in former First Lady Hillary Rodman Clinton's Women's Conference Circle.

Beverly teaches through storytelling with spirit-filled enthusiasm. She infuses listeners with courage to reject negative thoughts and embrace the positive with passion and commitment. Her audiences embark upon their own personal journeys toward realizing and experiencing the marvelous blessings that await them.

Her leadership has been recognized by numerous awards: the MassMutual President's Leadership Award, first inductee into the Bay Path College 21st Century Women Business Leaders Hall of Fame, and *Dollars & Sense Magazine* named her one of "Americas Best & Brightest Professional Women." Currently senior vice president at MassMutual Financial Group, a college trustee, and sits on numerous boards including the Women's Business Research Center, Washington, D.C.



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# CHAPTER FIVE

Applied Leadership—Putting Theory into Practice:  
How to Lead in a male dominated arena like politics  
Linda Melconian

“It won’t be no time till some woman will become so desperate politically and just lose all prospectus of right and wrong and maybe go from bad to worse and finally wind up in the Senate.”

—Will Rogers, *Weekly Articles*, March 31, 1929.

The day I was appointed the Massachusetts Senate’s first woman Majority Leader, a massive electrical power failure eliminated all lighting in my Springfield neighborhood. Everywhere, it was dark and cold—a raw, blistering and snowy January 15, Martin Luther King’s birthday.

I remember that evening so well. Early on, reporters from the electronic and printed media came to my house for exclusive interviews. Friends and neighbors arrived promptly with candles to brighten the pitch-black Victorian rooms. Someone started a fire in the fireplace to heat the living room so that the cameramen—whose hands were frozen—could set up their equipment. The reporters—all male—asked me, “Can’t you do something, Linda, in your new position to prevent this power outage?”

I responded spiritedly, “Truly, discord reigns in Massachusetts—a woman has been elected Majority Leader—you see the evidence right here!”

Yes, the heavens had been shaken up! Later that evening, when my husband arrived home, the revelers were still celebrating with me in our candle lit home. As he approached the house, he feared the worst; he knew then that peace had left our home for an immeasurable period of time.

My parents taught me to aim high, to reach for the stars even when they seemed unattainable, and to believe that opportunities for success abound. I started to ponder, “If I reached high, could I seize opportunities at that loftier level? If I targeted mediocrity, was I limiting myself to what I would achieve?” As a young girl, I remember saying over and over again, “I am Linda Jean Melconian unlimited!” I repeated that statement so many times that I really began to believe I could do anything if I worked hard enough.



As a competitive swimmer in high school and college I learned quickly how to win. Famed Olympic swim coach Charles E. Silvia used to tell us at practice, “Swim within yourself, let your stroke carry you, suppress extraneous stimuli, keep swimming, and bring it home at the end.” He instilled in us the most critical championship quality—a positive mental attitude beyond stroke technique. He showed us how to pace ourselves in practice and in life, to keep our eyes on the goal and to always finish strong.

Mount Holyoke College was my crucible. Mary Lyon, its founder, was an excellent role model for me and hundreds of thousands of other women who passed through those academic portals. By founding the first real college for women in 1837, she fought prejudice, removed gender barriers and refused to allow women to be limited. In order to enable women to hold their rightful place in society as equals to men, she understood that first of all they had to have a quality education. She was willing to take on what sagacious male leaders of that era perceived as incredible and insurmountable obstacles. Yet, she remained steadfast; she cultivated support and established an educational institution for women that today is second to none. Yes, Mary Lyon demonstrated clearly through her life work that leadership begins with a willingness to take risks. A starter and a pioneer, she created challenges, seized opportunities, and educated women; she did not wait for others to act.

I have tried to incorporate Mary Lyon’s insightful leadership qualities as my core principles: equality, hard work, determination, and especially the pioneering spirit. To pioneer is to lead, and to lead is all about taking risks. In the beginning, a leader must recognize that the first uncharted leadership steps may seem daunting, awkward, or uncertain. Anything attempted in life without risk does not require leadership. How else could I have been elected in the first place with a surname like Melconian—a woman and the daughter of a father who never finished high school; whose mother was brilliant, but dirt poor, and lived at a time when no college loans or scholarships existed for poor young women like her?

The challenges ahead seemed endless. To win, I had to work incessantly, debate skillfully, articulate concisely, and spend wisely. I capitalized on my education and nine-year work experience with U.S. House Speaker Thomas P. “Tip” O’Neill Jr., where, as the first woman staff person to have standing House Floor privileges working in the offices of all the top three leadership positions, I could demonstrate a foundation of applied

leadership. That is, if elected, I knew how to make crucial decisions in moments of crisis; I understood consensus, compromise, teamwork, and commitments; and I had built multiple political bridges of friendships and relationships. I also had the functional skills of a legislative leader.

The night I won, the outcome was in doubt until the wee hours of the morning. Starting at 10 P.M., my mentors “Tip” O’Neill and Leo Diehl—Speaker O’Neill’s administrative chief—began calling from the U.S. Capitol where they were monitoring returns from the Congressional elections. They continued to call every hour to see how their protégé was faring. Finally at 3 A.M., I called to tell them, it was official—I had won! They were so proud of me, especially Leo who had urged me to run and had remained confident of the outcome.

Then I asked the Speaker, what special advice he should give me to begin my Senate career. He responded, “Linda, the most important thing is to be liked by your colleagues.”

Reviewing my Senate leadership experiences, I realize now how insightful and correct those words truly were. Amiability and camaraderie are essential qualities to attain positions of powerful and skillful leadership. A popular leader will receive the benefit of the doubt on a controversial decision or a close vote that could swing either way. One vote can mean the life and death of a public policy initiative; one vote can end an issue or establish a new law; one vote can override a gubernatorial veto and alter social, religious, and political values for decades. When a vote is that crucial, a leader must be able to look colleagues right in the eyes and ask each one of them for his or her vote. That leader better have their approbation!

Speaker O’Neill did not have to tell me what I already knew—perception *is* reality. How you are perceived will determine what kind of response your leadership will receive. I had learned from him and Leo how to camouflage doubts, think and act positively, and be upbeat even when losing. What I did not realize was how quickly those qualities would test my applied leadership talents.

As Senate Chairwoman of the Joint Committee on Insurance, I had the daunting responsibility for all insurance bills—usually written with highly technical, complex verbiage and incomprehensible insurance jargon, mixed with run-on sentences of arcane regulatory language. The Insurance Committee had jurisdiction over all insurance bills filed in the state legislature. Its review would determine which bills died, which ones were studied further, and which ones—generally redrafted with

amendments—would move forward for further House and Senate action, possibly becoming new law. Tough negotiations with Committee members, strident advocacy by special interests and hardball influencing efforts from insurers whom I fondly called the “thousand dollar suit boys” (no women) preceded any committee legislative action on these measures. Not long after I became chairwoman, I noticed, all too frequently, that we could not reach consensus after serious negotiation and team effort. Yet, after a golf tournament, where my male colleagues and spokesmen for the insurance industry played, the members of the committee would come back and tell me that they had worked out a compromise on a particular bill and had the votes to report it out of committee.

The compromise was not always one I favored—I was losing substantive control of the committee. I had to act shrewdly, make some smart decisions, and follow through on them. So, I took golf lessons and started playing in the tournaments. Now I could not be left out of the discussions; I could participate and control the outcome. My presence on the golf course enabled me to lead the brainstorming deliberations on the controversial areas; I was able to break stalemates by listening carefully and directing the discussion until I saw the compromise that allowed everyone to come out a winner, or at least be reasonably satisfied. Five hours of golf followed by the “nineteenth hole” camaraderie gave me ample time to walk the members through the critical steps to reach an agreement and seize the moment to bring closure on a position that I could support. Simultaneously, I deflected potential challenges from the insurance lobbyists by laughing at my golf game, especially the excessive number of strokes it took to clear the sand traps. I received an “A” for gumption and good efforts, as I worked to lead everyone toward the result I wanted on the legislation.

Leadership requires courage, character, passion, and zeal. Its applications include practical strategies to promote the following ideals:

- A leader stands for something.
- A leader acts to advance the values perhaps learned in childhood and continued in adulthood to serve her well.
- A leader prepares herself to fight like a crusader for the noble causes and principles in which she really believes.

As a little girl, I remember my maternal grandmother’s stories

about her horrific childhood that sent goose bumps up and down my spine. She was a child victim of domestic violence and abuse so cruel and unforgiving that she sobbed uncontrollably whenever she spoke about her sad, abysmal childhood. She witnessed her brother burn to death, a direct result of her stepmother's sadistic cruelty that was orchestrated and perpetrated jointly by her father. Often, she and her sister were locked in a closet for days without food because of some minor infraction of an unreasonable, strict, and severe household rule her father had imposed on his daughters. In my grandmother's day, abuse in the home was simply endured, hidden from extended family, friends, and neighbors. It was solely a private matter, a dark, well-kept family secret. To expose this heinous crime would bring social humiliation and shame to the victim, a scarlet letter "D" (for domestic violence) which she would wear for the rest of her life. Yet, the mental and emotional scars never subsided. My grandmother carried those emotional scars of child abuse throughout her life. It affected her relationship with all her children and me as well.

Perhaps her history inspired me to advocate forcefully and to champion laws that addressed and helped to prevent domestic violence. I was passionately and fervently committed to this issue; I invested time, energy, and the influence of my leadership position. I worked closely with legislative colleagues, women and children's advocacy groups, community and business leaders. We brought domestic violence to the forefront and together, we supported and strengthened Massachusetts' battered women's shelters through successive state budgets. We were able to enact a law to provide unemployment insurance to victims of domestic violence who were forced to leave their employment voluntarily or involuntarily in order to flee their abuser. For more than a decade, I sponsored a Charitable Golf Tournament which raised substantial monies—more than \$350,000—for battered women's shelters in western Massachusetts. And, yes, the "thousand dollar suit boys" participated long after I had relinquished my leadership on the Insurance Committee. (I also improved on my ability to clear sand traps!)

I may have been the first Massachusetts legislator to visit the inside of a battered women's shelter. Utilizing applied leadership strategies to put a face on domestic violence and making it a community issue rather than merely a women's issue, we successfully built the latest state-of-the-art, secure, comfortable, and functional battered women's shelter. Today it provides a new

beginning for battered women and their children—a safe place to live, work, and play.

To overcome funding obstacles and realize our objectives—including new laws, statewide awareness, and a commitment to ameliorate domestic violence—I was honest about my dedication to the issue. Acting with candor and disclosing my *modus operandi*, I kept everyone working together toward the same goal. Not only did I build a team of legislators, advocates, and administrators, but also, I brought all of them early into the discussions. This practical, applied leadership generated enthusiasm, energy, and a willingness for everyone to be part of a winning team. Together, we held countless strategy sessions; we kept everyone focused; we prevented opponents from picking off anyone on the team; we cultivated and lined up support from every possible source; and we encouraged letter writing, phone calls, rallies, and media coverage to change the laws and to accomplish our goals.

A leader is a starter; she is creative. She waits for no one to promote an exciting idea when she knows it is the right thing to do. Action, timely brought, is one important element of effective applied leadership. When a constituent called to ask why we did not have a state veterans' cemetery in Massachusetts I could not answer him. At the time, I believed all veterans' cemeteries were federal satellites of Arlington National Cemetery.

Was I wrong! Most of the fifty states operated veterans' cemeteries with state monies after the initial construction with a fifty-fifty match of federal and state funds. (Today, the federal government pays 100 percent for the construction of state veterans' cemeteries, while the states pay 100 percent of the operating expenses). Close to 90,000 veterans lived in western Massachusetts—many of them WWII veterans who had been stationed at Westover Air Force Base, Chicopee, Massachusetts, and remained in the area after their honorable discharge. For them, the nearest veterans' cemetery was the federal one in Bourne, on Cape Cod, three or more hours away, depending on summer traffic traveling to the Cape. It seemed reasonable, fair, and equitable to build the first Massachusetts state veterans' cemetery in western Massachusetts.

I jumped on the idea right away. I asked one of my interns, a Persian Gulf veteran studying law and working in my office, to research the possibility. It seemed a fresh, new idea. We spoke to veterans, told them of our idea, and asked them to help us. Veterans' groups responded immediately, joined our efforts, and

supported it overwhelmingly. They were so proud to be asked and to be included in this effort *for them*. No one had ever proposed anything like this idea with such steadfast commitment to make it a reality.

Speaker O'Neill's famous axiom, "Everyone likes to be asked," is perspicacious. It flatters egos and makes a leader appear serious, approachable, and committed. When legislators in other parts of the state attempted to throw roadblocks in our way to trample our efforts because they had not thought of the idea for *their* area, I made a commitment to work with them to build a second state veterans' cemetery in Massachusetts—after the one in western Massachusetts was built. (Some states have two, and the number of Massachusetts veterans justified a second state cemetery). I made the commitment and I kept it. We now have two Massachusetts state veterans' cemeteries. When a leader makes a commitment, she or he must honor it.

A leader's word is his or her bond; if it is broken, all that is left is a sullied reputation; respect for leadership is lost, loyalty dissipates. Peers and subordinates will not help to perform the impossible for any leader when they know they cannot fully depend upon that leader. A leader must be prepared to make real sacrifices in his or her life. Long days and nights, tough battles, wars fought, won and lost define true leadership. Too often, family takes a back seat.

Early one Sunday morning, when I was working on medical malpractice reform legislation, a heavy and repeated knocking sounded on my front door. It was before 8 A.M. I went downstairs and answered the door to find several doctors from my district standing there, waiting to have a chat with me about medical malpractice tort reform. They had arrived to discuss specifically caps on pain and suffering, now a national issue and the bane of the legal community. Because of the early hour, they had brought me a gift—a large coffee from Donut Dip. I invited them in and ran upstairs. My husband, with one eye open, asked me, "What's happening? Who is knocking so loudly on the door at this ungodly hour on Sunday morning?" When I told him, he opened both eyes, looked long and hard at me, sighed and said, "*You're* the Senator, *I'm* sleeping." For a few seconds, I realized how much of his private, home life, and quiet, sharing time with me was so frequently interrupted by my leadership responsibilities.

Truly, I have been blessed with great staff. Behind every successful CEO is an even better staff. Indeed, we are only as good as our staff! Good staff is imperative to successful leadership; it

makes you look competent, professional, and earns peer respect. A good staff is vital: so many issues require attention and so little, precious time exists to respond. My staff effectively directed my endless energies, informed me about which phone call was important, when a vote occurred, and why I needed to respond more fully to a particular constituent.

Loyalty remains paramount in any working relationship and I fully appreciated the performance of each one of them—always making me look good. Who else could have understood my idiosyncrasies, strengths and weaknesses and known how to project only positive characteristics to a doubting public?

Most importantly, always treat each staff member as if he or she is a special member of your family and that your office offers opportunities for advancement and merit. Staff will perform the seemingly impossible for you when each one knows he or she can rely on your support of his or her own personal development. Since I started out as a member of Speaker O' Neill's staff, I fully understood what it was like to work with "Tip," a leader who provided me with opportunities to begin to develop my own leadership potential; and with Leo, an administrator who encouraged me to achieve, who recognized everyone's abilities and diverse talents, and who brought out the very best in all of us.

One day, I returned from lunch in a really good mood and invited my entire staff into my office to listen to a couple of great jokes I had just heard. All but one laughed uproariously when I told the jokes. "What's the matter?" I asked the one who had not responded. "Aren't you in a jovial mood today?"

She answered: "Yes, but I don't have to laugh anymore, I'm leaving Friday!"

Humor in the office place is a great stress reliever. Staff told me so. Maybe that is why all of them were always smiling after I had delivered a speech. Speech writing can be a thankless art. My speechwriter spent hours drafting my speeches; then, we would spend more hours together editing and redrafting until I thought it was near perfect. I liked drafts. After I had made the speech, I would give it back to my speech writer with entire sections taken out, rewrites all over the pages, and additional notes written on napkins while I was waiting to speak. I called those words on the napkins my "scribbles." The best speeches are scribbles and the best scribbles are written on napkins.

Saving a hospital is an extraordinarily rewarding experience especially when powerful institutions have a different agenda. Two major health care systems served the residents of the

Greater Springfield area. One, the Sisters of Providence Health System, faced critical financial collapse. Many believed that access to health care, quality, and choice of health care would have been compromised if the Massachusetts legislature did not step in to provide the financial relief essential to keep alive the Sisters of Providence Health Care System and its important mission. That was the short-term solution. A more troubling, pervasive, and unsettling issue was the fact that the major health insurer in the area refused to contract with the Sisters' acute care hospital because it had an exclusive contract with the other health care system. In fact, that health care system owned the insurer. Without a contract, Sisters of Providence believed its system could not survive.

Knowing how to seek alternative methods to find a solution when you cannot win is the mark of applied leadership. I had led the delegation in filing legislation to make the insurer a willing provider for the Sisters' hospital. Even if it became law—which was highly unlikely given the opposition—it would not be implemented. The opposition was prepared to challenge the law in the courts until the Sisters of Providence Health Care System folded. Clearly, it was time to think about a way to resolve this dilemma outside of the legislature.

I went to Florida for a few days to reflect. When I returned, as I was driving to Boston for a legislative session, I thought of a solution that might work. I called the State Attorney General, Tom Riley. Since his office had the regulatory powers to investigate potentially monopolistic contracts that denied access to health care, it was worth a try. I suggested to him a specific legislative charge authorizing his office to investigate these practices in the Greater Springfield area and to work with the parties towards a more open contract. I thought it seemed prudent and reasonable. He agreed. Our staffs conferred to write the bill discreetly as we suggested publicly that the Attorney General's office ought to be involved. When the bill was unveiled, it surprised everyone and succeeded. No one was willing to preclude the State's Attorney General from exercising his authority in these matters. Since then, the hospital has received State financial assistance; the parties have signed a partial contract, and recently agreed to a full contract. "Sisters" are alive and kicking!

Functional skills to lead boldly and dynamically are critical to sustain a position of leadership. Two functional skills of applied leadership are relevant to the Sisters' situation. First, know when to break away and reflect. A short absence from the day-to-day



grind can help you to think wisely and see clearly which course of action can really work best. Do not hesitate to rely on the multiple friendships and relationships you have built over the years to help find that solution. Second, know when to be clever like a fox. Centuries ago, Machiavelli, perhaps one of the greatest political philosophers on applied leadership, pointed out that a leader can respond sometimes like a courageous lion; however, if circumstances require a different kind of leadership to succeed, then the leader must act like a shrewd fox. While working to iron out the complexities of a solution that is achievable, like a fox, disclose bits of information without telegraphing your whole strategy. Machiavelli will be smiling!

Nothing is more gratifying to a leader than knowing that loyalty is a two-way street. When Tom Birmingham called me to talk about running for President of the Massachusetts Senate, I did not hesitate. I knew I could support him enthusiastically for a whole host of reasons. Immediately, I said, "Yes, you have my support, what can I do to help?" I made the decision easily and was ready to run with it, win or lose. When I called my husband later that day to tell him I had committed to support Tom in running for the office of President of the Massachusetts Senate, he asked me why I had responded so quickly. He thought I should have waited to be courted a little more. I told him I had studied my colleagues, I knew which one I wanted to support. Tom was genuine, trustworthy, insightful, and progressive. As the campaign ensued, I gathered information that was beneficial to his candidacy, and I advised him on how to cultivate and line up potential support from every possible source, leaving no stone unturned.

Early on, I helped to plan strategy with his team to strengthen confidence in his leadership abilities and to empower everyone to have a stake in the outcome. Power is in numbers. He had the numbers and did not forget my contribution. He appointed me to the position of Assistant Majority Leader. There, I served as an integral member of his leadership team, facilitated new policy initiatives, secured crucial votes, and honed important consensus building skills.

In more than 350 years of Massachusetts' history a woman had not served as the Majority Floor Leader of the Massachusetts Senate. It was a glass ceiling I was ready to break and Senate President Tom Birmingham supported me. Yet, powerful forces intervened in an unprecedented way to test my ability to achieve that position.

Returning from a trip to Paris with seven female friends, I met

my staff at the airport. They quickly informed me that I was in trouble. While I was away, a couple of my male colleagues and other influential state leaders had conspired to attempt to derail my appointment. They preferred to have a male leader who thought more as they did.

Two other serious candidates surfaced. Taking nothing for granted, I spent long hours at work and for two months practically lived at the State House, assisting my colleagues, making sure I was visible and preparing myself fully for any potential harmful assaults. I made certain that I had answers for any questions that might be asked of me, because I knew no one can trump or embarrass a leader when she is well prepared.

During those two months I also exercised frequently. Sound mind and body complement each other. Exercise always helps to eliminate the aches and pains from stress and provides the lungs with oxygen for energy and stamina. It helps the mind stay alert, sharp, and spontaneous. As several members articulated their strong support for my candidacy, the opposition fizzled. Tom Birmingham remained steadfast and solidly behind me. I became "Madam Leader." My swim coach was delighted—I had finished strong!

Once I physically occupied the Majority Leader's Office, I removed from the walls the portraits of men I affectionately called "the old geezers"—those men who had occupied the same office in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. I knew they would have disapproved of my ascendancy, so I replaced them with kinder, gentler, more inviting Monet and Homer paintings along with inspirational photos of my mentors, Speaker O'Neill and Leo Diehl. I wanted the Majority Leader's Office to reflect me and provided a warm, inviting, and welcoming ambience in which colleagues, advocates, and citizens could visit, facilitate, and negotiate public policy.

As "Madam Leader," I had to listen and work with men and woman seeking their support for our public policy agenda. Engaging colleagues in dialogue, I tried to encourage everyone to speak out, because everyone's opinion mattered. As a leader, I learned that sometimes it is more important to give than to receive. A true leader is not compelled to lead every time; rather, she visualizes the results, points the way, and assists others to let their abilities and talents shine, too. Working with everyone, including the opposition, toward building a consensus requires an openness to compromise. A political leader never wins *everything* he or she wants, so don't wait for it to happen—it won't!

No one advances without cooperation and collective effort. For example, characteristics of a successful leader include the following:

- A successful leader learns quickly to minimize interpersonal conflicts and to resolve them quickly,
- A successful leader reaches out and attempts to understand the reasons why someone has taken an adversarial position to his or her leadership or toward anyone else on the team,
- A successful leader knows how to listen carefully to what is causing the conflict, and
- A successful leader takes time to encourage a few minutes of calm, private conversation that can bring about a resolution of differences.

Throughout my public service tenure, I have never been one-dimensional and no one issue has ever dominated my career. Yet, I have been persistent, and tenacious; and at times, I have advocated forcefully. Unafraid to take risks, I refused to back away from fighting for something I believed was the right thing to do no matter how controversial or politically unpopular. These qualities of applied leadership reflected my style as the majority party leader. Whenever possible, I encouraged my female colleagues to adopt them as well. A leader must demonstrate functional skills beyond the mechanics of her profession—knowledge about the legislative process or ease with public speaking.

A leader requires insight, creativity, and flexibility; and her actions must be motivated by values and ideals worthy of the risk, noble in the crusade, right on the objective, and visionary in the outcome. To break down impediments that inhibit development of our potential as individuals, as a Commonwealth and as a nation, are the motivations that drove my efforts.

I believed that a governmental institution like the Massachusetts Senate ought to stand for something; its collective voice, actions, and decisions should uphold certain values. After all, public policy and budgetary decisions at every level of government are about spending priorities; how we as a society prioritize the spending of our public dollars speaks volumes about rights, opportunities, and the ideals of our nation.

I am proud of Massachusetts' accomplishments: requiring high standards of excellence in education; increasing access to health care for all our citizens, especially women, children, and the elderly; breaking down barriers of discrimination, prejudice, bigotry, and exclusion; enhancing economic growth and

development opportunities, and investing in worker retraining to provide skills that will create jobs.

The famous cliché, *when the going gets tough, the tough get going* captures the essence of leadership that anticipates setbacks and adjustments. The route to a major objective is seldom straight and clear. The ability to make adjustments to deal with minor setbacks and the willingness to compromise to gain consensus determine ultimate success.

A successful leader does not give up after failure, defeat, or a fall; rather, she views the shortcoming merely as a temporary setback. A resilient leader reassesses his or her strategy and springs forward with renewed vigor to win the next battle and the larger war.

Creating a right of privacy for genetic testing was no easy challenge. Victory seemed unattainable. It involved four years of negotiating, facilitating, and mediating; each session required long hours, longer days, followed by months of paralysis even after breaking major deadlocks. Insurers, especially life insurers, did not want this bill to pass in Massachusetts. Not only did they want to know everyone's family history, but they also sought information on the prognoses of possible diseases to which an individual's genetic make-up might make him or her predisposed. Life insurers had one objective: to use that information, no matter how inaccurate or unreliable, to discriminate against policy applicants by failing to give a life insurance policy or charge an excessive premium.

With the discovery and mapping of the human genome, the urge to utilize this twenty-first century scientific knowledge to test individuals as a means of prevention, (i.e. to monitor them regularly, or to be able to prescribe some kind of medical treatment to help prevent the development of the disease) was phenomenal. An individual's right of privacy regarding genetic testing had to be established. Strident advocates on one side and insurers on the other side fought with each other over expansion of privacy rights. To enter that room full of adversarial confrontation required patience, mental, physical and emotional preparation. What a daunting negotiating challenge!

I tried to engage both sides in dialogue to understand each other's points of view. As conversation replaced a series of shouting matches, I began to push for reasonable concessions from both sides. To enact a bill I was willing to compromise. Not long before the midnight hour closed the legislative session for that year, all the parties interested in the legislation worked

together to iron out the eleven areas of differences. Today, as a result of our efforts, Massachusetts' citizens exercise one of the most comprehensive right of privacy for genetic testing in the nation.

In life, we all look up to those whom we wish to emulate—first, because they stand for certain core values, beliefs, and convictions that we cherish. We study how they applied their leadership skills to achieve an admired legacy and then we adopt those qualities that will make our leadership unique, meritorious, and accomplished. Finally, we pass on to others the insights, strategies, and functional skills of the leadership torch that we have utilized in our particular profession. Any compilation of applied leadership insights, strategies, and functional skills to inspire others to follow must include, but not be limited to, values learned early, risks willingly taken, courage, conviction and character exuded, commitments honored, teamwork and consensus nurtured, staff appreciated, and loyalty respected. These applicable leadership attributes are not unique to the political arena; rather, they are admired and respected in business, academia, and professions like law and medicine. Applied leadership is universal.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Majority Leader Emerita of the Massachusetts State Senate, Linda is the first woman to attain the position of Majority Leader in the Massachusetts legislature. A State Senator for twenty-two years, she was also the former Assistant Counselor to U.S. House of Representatives' Speaker Tomas P. "Tip" O'Neill, Jr. Currently, as the Visiting Assistant Professor at Sawyer School of Management, Suffolk University, Boston, Massachusetts, Linda shares her unique leadership experiences and gifts to train men and women to become leaders in their professions. In addition, Linda practices law, writes and speaks at business, education and nonprofit conferences on administrative leadership and cutting-edge health care law and public policy. A "Cum Laude" graduate of Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley, Massachusetts, Linda earned her M.A. degree from George Washington University, Washington, D.C.; she received her J.D. degree from George Mason University, Arlington, Virginia. She and her husband, Andrew J. Scibelli, live in Springfield, Massachusetts. Author of public policy columns and guest editorials for a number of newspapers, Linda has written and self-published a booklet, *Lead and Win in a Male Dominated Arena...Like Politics*, and is a contributing author to *APPLIED LEADERSHIP*, Insight Publishing's 2005 book publication.



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# CHAPTER SIX

## Managing, Motivating, and Leading a Multi-Generational Workforce

Bruce S. Wilkinson, CSP

The workplace of today is in a constant state of change. Corporate mergers, acquisitions, down-sizing, right-sizing, budget cutbacks, employee/public initiated lawsuits, changing technology, doing more with less and ongoing regulatory compliance issues have forced many organizations and government agencies to rethink the way they operate, as well as how they manage, motivate, and lead their workforce.

Additionally, managers and supervisors are faced with new challenges in addressing workplace violence, employee/public safety, sexual harassment, diversity/sensitivity/disciplining/firing issues and dealing with troubled employees.

That is why it is imperative that executives, managers and supervisors learn how to manage, motivate, inspire, communicate and lead by example on a daily basis. They are also going to be held accountable for being consistent with their praise, recognition and discipline when it comes to addressing employee behavior and misconduct. Why? Because the new diversity challenges in the workplace will be trying to motivate a multi-generational workforce to listen, learn and work together as an effective team. The reason for this is Baby Boomers, Gen-X'ers and Gen-Y's all act, think, and learn differently.

### **TODAY'S NEW EMPLOYEES ARE DIFFERENT**

We all know that times have changed and the type of person looking for a job has changed too. I remember when:

- Labels used to be on the inside of your clothes,
- When earrings were just in your ears,
- When guys held up their pants with a belt, and
- If you took a gun, murdered both of your parents and confessed to the murder, it was actually *your* fault!

Today's young employees come from households very different than mine in regards to how they are taught and allowed to grow up. I remember when my Dad said, "Jump," I would ask, "How high?" Today, if I told my son to "jump," he would ask, "Why?" My Dad was a World War II veteran and if I would have asked why he would have replied, "So you can live!"

When my Dad told me to clean up my room and make my bed, I



did it. When I told my son to clean up his room and make his bed he said, “Why? Do you have a tour coming through here this afternoon?” *Wow!* What a different attitude—things are very different today.

## **THE CHALLENGE IS WITH THE WHYS**

The reason leaders have to be concerned with this new type of employee is mostly because of the Gen-Ys. Workplace leaders will have no choice but to address this new generation of young employees (those who were born in 1977 and later) because there are six million more Gen-Ys looking for a job each day in America than there are Baby Boomers and Gen-Xers. These young people will not respond to any Baby Boomer manager or supervisor who tells them to do something merely because they said so—they will all want to know why!

## **EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP CHANGES BEGINS AT THE TOP**

Okay, so we know that leadership styles will have to change in order to manage, motivate and lead a multi-generational workforce, but where will the change come from? It has to come from the top! I’ll never forget a conversation I had ten years ago with a construction superintendent on a sixty-three-story building being constructed under his direct supervision. I was introduced to him by the vice president who told him I was rewriting their safety and health program. I asked the superintendent what he thought his role should be in this program at the job-site level. He looked at the vice president to see if he would be in trouble, turned to me and said, “When safety is important in the corporate office, then it will be important in the field.” That is one of the most honest statements a supervisor has ever said to me in front of an immediate supervisor. He later told me he had heard all of this before and it would be hard to get behind any new type of leadership culture until he saw top management’s commitment first.

## **PEOPLE WANT TO WORK FOR PEOPLE THEY RESPECT**

As a whole, this supervisor was right. Employees will always tell you in pairs or groups that they want to work for people they like. But if you talk to them individually, they will always say they want to work for people they respect. I have trained and educated thousands of leaders and employees in the twenty years I have been a professional speaker, trainer, and consultant. During that time I have determined that the top three reasons employees

lose respect for their leaders are:

1. They did not do what they said they would do and did not have enough moral fiber to tell their direct reports what happened,
2. There was no follow-up on what they said would happen, therefore no action took place, and
3. They asked for input on what was needed to implement new ideas and programs and no feedback was ever given to the employees who provided the information requested.

This top three list pretty much sums up the main reasons employees lose respect for their leaders. The next time that same senior person calls a meeting to introduce a new idea or program, most employees in the back of the room are usually thinking or saying to themselves or to someone next to them, "I'll believe it when I see it."

## **DETERMINING NEW GOALS, PHILOSOPHY, CULTURE AND LEADERSHIP STYLE**

First and second line managers and supervisors will always react and respond to whatever is important to upper management at any given point in time—it's just human nature. Employees will always react and respond to whatever is important to their immediate managers and supervisors on a daily basis; but only if they truly believe that their supervisors will lead by example as well as support them when they perform as instructed. That's why employees will typically do what their leaders do—not what they say.

It works the same with parents and children. A parent can tell a new teenage driver to come to a complete stop at each stop sign while driving. However, the young driver will probably make a "rolling stop" (or will "kinda stop") at each corner if that is what they see their parents do. Remember, managers and supervisors are the "parents" and "grandparents" of the workplace. We all know that managers, supervisors, and parents want to be liked by their subordinates and children. But it is better in the long run to be respected by both—this is the key to long-term leadership success.

Below is a list of some key questions that should be determined and then implemented by senior leadership in order to have effective and consistent leadership across the as multi-generational employee compliance and understanding throughout the organization:

1. What are the mission, vision, core values, culture and/or goals of the organization? Can we make a matching employee climate to fit the organization's beliefs?
2. What types of strategies, tactics and action plans have been developed by the organization in order to accomplish the end result of these goals?
3. What type of strategic planning, leadership retreats or continued employment training and education programs have been implemented to assist executives, managers, supervisors, and full-time/part-time multi-generational employees in understanding and implementing this information?
4. What has the organization done to motivate, inspire and recognize employees to get them to take ownership in their mission, vision, values, goals, objectives, culture and philosophy? Are there visible leadership examples for them to follow and model?
5. Are the organization's expectations, philosophy, culture, policies, procedures, rules, safety and health plan, and disciplinary procedures thoroughly explained to employees as part of their new hire and transferred employees orientation? Additionally, are any of these items covered and reinforced with them once they have started work?
6. Can the organization make it a practice to have first line leaders re-check (and document) the new employee's understanding of employment rules and procedures within the first thirty days of employment or transferred employment for maximum effectiveness?
7. Finally, what has management done to convince all employees that it will consistently enforce the organization's stated and documented methods of accomplishing the philosophy, goals, and objectives of their policies, procedures and rules?

## **INTEGRATING ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS, PHILOSOPHY AND AN ACCOUNTABILITY CULTURE INTO THE MULTI-GENERATIONAL WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENT**

The first step to initiate a consistent productive workforce is to create a matching organizational culture and employee climate that holds everyone accountable for their agreed upon workplace commitments, performance, and responsibilities. In other words, everyone has to do what he or she said they were going to do.

The next step in maintaining an effective leadership organization is to implement the three P's of establishing a culture of responsibility, accountability, and understanding. The three P's are:

1. *Well thought-out-Policies.* Organizational policies are a way to take state and federal laws and put them into day-to-day workplace operations for common sense compliance purposes. For example, it is against federal and most state laws to have illegal drugs in someone's possession; however, it must be against an organization's policy for employees to have illegal drugs in their possession, body, or on their person while they are at work in order for it to be considered misconduct. In other words, management (through effective and respected leadership) must utilize implemented policies to determine what type of illegal activity and unacceptable behavior will be considered misconduct at work.
2. *Consistently implemented Procedures.* Managers and supervisors utilize procedures in order to consistently implement organizational policy on a consistent and equitable basis. Well-documented training and education programs usually accomplish this. I say well documented because if the manager/supervisor did not write it down, then you probably can't prove it happened if and when you get to court. The courts will always believe managers and supervisors receive more training than hourly workers do. Remember, when you get to court, the judge and jury expect management to be the bright ones! In the opinion of a jury, it is usually not considered misconduct merely if the supervisor knows it is. It is usually considered misconduct only when the employee knew it before doing it. Therefore, documentation of what happened and when it happened is important.

Is there a difference between training and education? You bet there is! Training tells employees what to do and how to do it; however, education tells employees (and children for the parent-supervisor) why leadership would like them to do it or why they do not want them to do it. In other words, the education element in each training program gives employees the reason for what we ask them to do. It's the buy-in for the employee (or child) that creates ownership!

Do you remember when your parents said do this because they

said so and that is all you have to know? Although we probably promised not to do this to our kids when we grew up, we all got amnesia! Employees react the same way when managers and supervisors tell them to do something instead of telling them why we need them to do it. Remember, it is the “why” that is important. They flash back to their parents and that’s when managers and supervisors start to lose the respect of their employees. It only gets worse from here.

1. *Consistently enforced Practices.* It is the third P that is most important when it comes to effective leadership because it is our day-to-day visible practices that indicate whether we as leaders will actually “talk the talk” and “walk the walk.” It is our lack of follow through, as demonstrated by our practices, that causes employees to lose respect for us as leaders. Poor and inconsistent practices on the part of managers and supervisors also cause lawsuits, poor morale, decreased productivity, higher turnover, and increased employee misconduct. It’s true! Most people are good employees and do not mind respectfully administered and consistent discipline for violations of a policy or procedure they were clearly aware of as either a condition of employment or a condition of continued employment, as long as there has also been consistent praise and recognition from leadership as well. However, what employees do not understand is why they have to follow the rules while others visibly do not. After all, leadership said that all employees would be held accountable for their actions. Remember, without *demonstrated* accountability from leadership, there is no believability by employees; then there is no respect from employees.

Keep in mind that most managers and leaders get into trouble through their inconsistent disciplinary practices because they forget to implement their disciplinary procedures based on the knowledge that their most valuable employee might violate them. Management usually expects only certain types of employees to violate rules, and they are usually surprised when someone important gets caught doing the same thing! Individual accountability must be part of a responsible workplace, and managers will always be more respected for their consistency when it comes to their day-to-day practices in implementing the organization’s policies, procedures, and rules. Remember, it’s

hard to be an effective manager or supervisor if all your employees like you all the time. So you might as well aim for being respected by the majority of employees instead!

## **MANAGING, MOTIVATING AND INSPIRING MULTI-GENERATIONAL EMPLOYEE BEHAVIOR**

Becoming an effective and respected leader will be more difficult yet more important than ever in the twenty-first century. Today's and tomorrow's new multi-generational employees do not and will not easily trust management as much as their parents trusted the employers they had unless that trust is demonstrated and earned.

Additionally, workers in this new generation want to be more informed and routinely recognized for their creativity and accomplishments if they are going to be held accountable for following an organization's rules. An excellent example of this culture is Southwest Airlines. To date, Southwest is the only airline that has not laid off any employees since the terrorist attack of 9/11. Many people leave higher paying jobs each year to go to work for Southwest because of the continuous positive recognition their employees receive. Southwest Airlines also creates an enjoyable workplace while still holding employees accountable. But it is not that difficult to produce the same type of positive employee attitudes and workplace culture employers of choice have. It is a simple formula to follow. In my experience, some of the reasons an effective, productive, customer service and team-oriented multi-generational workforce stays with an employer are as follows:

- They feel respected and appreciated,
- They are in the know, and
- They feel part of the decision making process.

But that is not all. To ensure an exceptional workforce culture with a motivated multi-generational workforce, leaders should discipline themselves and inspire other managers, supervisors, and leaders to take charge of the employees' "climate/environment" and observe, recognize, and discuss both acceptable and unacceptable behavior on a routine basis, because behavior is an observable act. Keep catching people in the act of doing something positive and effective.

☞ one-on-one contacts to:

- Be an employee coach
- Promote clean fun/enjoyment at work,

- Motivate each employee individually/differently, as necessary,
- Give recognition/feedback/counsel on a routine basis,
- Change attitudes, direct behavior, encourage input, promote decision making,
- Support promoted culture, core values statements, strategic thinking, teams, problem solving, create self-worth, positive workplace climate,
- Build respect/loyalty and mentor others,
- Create an inclusive environment,
- Create learning and growth opportunities,
- Embrace/plan for change,
- Encourage innovative thinking,
- Determine potential “fast-track” employees,
- Support and enforce safety/injury prevention practices,
- Support respectful leadership/customer service practices,
- Consistently change and alter poor work habits, poor performance,
- Determine and document the need for follow-up,
- Discipline with dignity as necessary,
- Listen to understand—not respond, and
- Look for teachable moments.

Remember! Another key to exceptional employee motivation inspiration, and communication is having a positive leadership attitude. Attitude affects, and is reflected, in your tone of voice—what you say, your body language and your facial expressions. This is important because employees seldom quit organizations—they quit *bosses!*

Explain *why* programs, policies, procedures, practices, rules, and the implementation of government regulations are necessary without being asked first. Remember to use “EBE”—education by explanation!

Create a matching workplace culture and climate that treats each employee and customer with respect and dignity. Do not criticize individuals in front of co-workers and other personnel. Treat employees the way they need to be treated!

Develop ways to educate and motivate employees in how to prepare, plan for, and make the best out of change. Remember:

- Take *charge* of change;
- Champion change;
- Change will lead to *choices*;

- Change will lead to *challenges*, however,
- Change may also lead to individual, team and organizational opportunities for *success*.

REMEMBER: Change is inevitable; adaptability is optional!

Here are some tips that will help leaders and their employees be prepared to make the best out of change:

- Realize that change will come and come often.
- Rely on the past and current strengths that parents, teachers, loved ones, clergy, friends, co-workers and mentors have given you to survive.
- Determine any weaknesses (such as decision making) you may have and seek help, assistance and education from friends, family, colleagues, seminars or books to improve these areas on a routine basis.
- Create the mindset that with change comes an opportunity for success that may not have existed earlier. Some individuals actually utilize change to their advantage because it forces them to make a decision and take action that for some reason they may not have done on their own.

There are many elements that make up an effective leader. But those leaders and supervisors who will be most effective, successful, and respected will be the ones who can manage, motivate, communicate, inspire, discipline, and document on a consistent basis. But that's not all; an effective leader will also have to make sure that employees have a clear understanding of the organization's vision, mission, values, goals, philosophy, and culture. They will also have to know:

- The reason (or why) behind policies, procedures, practices and rules of conduct,
- Specific job expectations,
- Lines of authority/communication,
- The difference between clean fun and horseplay/harassment,
- How to make specific recommendations to management/leadership,
- Why compliance with written policies, procedures rules, and practices is necessary,
- The importance of protecting co-workers, customers, clients, and the general public from harm,



- The importance of realizing where their paycheck comes from,
- What type of consistent enforcement will be utilized when it comes to violations of the organization's policies, procedures, work rules, culture, and code of conduct,
- The importance of complying with local/state/federal, safety, health and employment regulations as a condition of employment.

As you can see, it is going to be difficult and challenging to be an effective leader of multi-generational workforce in the twenty-first century. But it will be a little easier if every manager and supervisor realizes there is not that much difference between being a manager or a parent. Managers and supervisors have always been required by safety/health and worker's compensation laws to "protect employees, from them, in spite of them." In other words, most employees basically have "no fault insurance coverage" when it comes to getting hurt at work. It's also no different with parents who have to "protect their children, from them, in spite of them." Some children at a certain age think that they have a constitutional right to do, what they want to do when they want to do it, and so do some employees. They are wrong! The United States is not a free country—it is a democratic country with a republic form of government and we all have rules (both at home and at work). The key for leaders is to know how to implement these rules in a way that each employee (or child) has a clear understanding as to why we want them to comply, as well as what the consequences will be if they do not. Just tell the truth! Whenever my kids would tell me that this or that is not fair, I would always remind them of what my dad would always tell me, "A 'fair' comes into town once a year with a merry-go-round, and this ain't it!"

I always close each of my manager and supervisor training sessions with utilizing the P.R.I.D.E. Management Principles for Effective Leadership:

**P** *The P stands for principles*—What are the principles of the organization and can you tell that these principles are alive and well through visible leadership practices?

**R** *The R stands for respect*. Learn to give respect to each employee who consistently follows the policies, procedures, and culture of the organization.

**I** *The I stands for informative*. Today's managers and supervisors must constantly utilize inspirational and motivational techniques

to keep employees informed as to what's expected of them and how they are to conduct themselves at work.

**D** *The D stands for discipline.* Managers must learn to enforce the organization's policies, procedures, and rules consistently—no matter who violates them. The best leaders can do this effectively and respectfully and still maintain a professional relationship with their employees.

**E** *The E stands for enthusiasm.* Enthusiasm is the unknown force behind success and it becomes contagious throughout the workforce when it is authentic. Employees will usually pick up on the importance of what they have been asked to do when their supervisors are passionate and enthusiastic about their work.

Keep in mind that the PRIDE Management Principles can work just as effectively for leaders who are parents as well. And remember, both managers and parents want to be liked, but it's better if we choose to effectively lead so that we can do our job, which is to manage, motivate, inspire, communicate, recognize, coach, mentor, support good habits, teach accountability, change and alter bad habits, and consistently discipline as necessary.

Finally, a good leader will not coerce or threaten employees to obey policies, procedures and rules, but instead they will present educated options, choices, and consequences and let employees choose.

To close, I have provided you with an “at-a-glance” summary of multi-generational leadership considerations for your review. I hope it helps you both survive and thrive leading those who ask “why?”

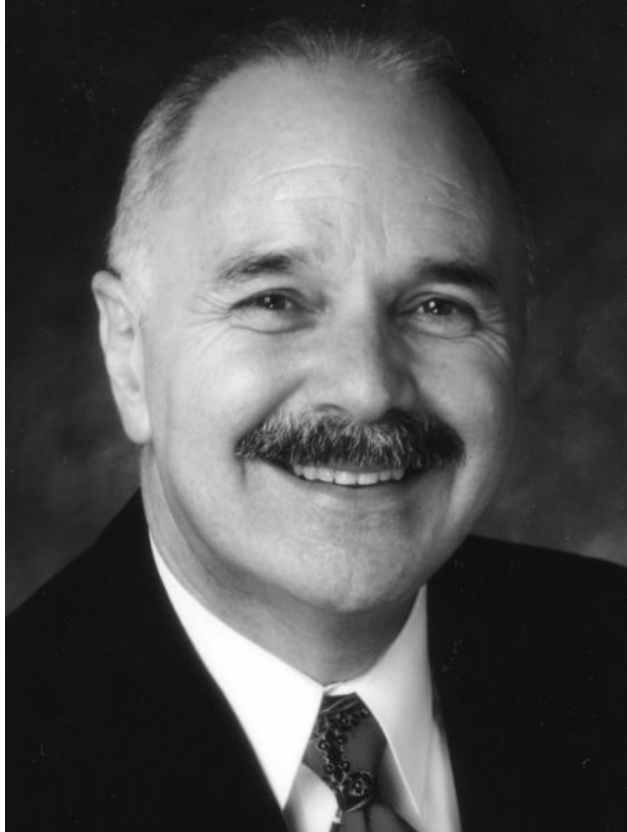
### **Leadership Considerations:**

- Hire for attitude—train for success!
- Inspire and implement a matching culture and employee climate
- Support promoted mission, vision, and core values
- Keep service, safety, and customer support as values not just priorities
- Make work enjoyable and lighthearted when possible
- Chose accountability over popularity
- Keep things simple and understandable—communicate often
- Motivate individually/differently as necessary
- Discipline consistently with respect and dignity

- Praise in public; discipline in private
- Address and alter poor behavior daily
- Help your people grow and develop
- Put employee recognition on your daily “to do” list
- Be inclusive and listen to understand
- Embrace, champion, and plan for change
- Allow for input and questions and shared best practices
- Encourage innovative thinking
- Enhance individual respectful expression within acceptable standards
- Model leadership/customer service behavior daily
- Applaud teamwork; recognize excellence
- Look for teachable moments
- Speak and behave with “one voice”—“one organization”—in the presence of employees, co-workers, visitors, and customers

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bruce S. Wilkinson, CSP is a leadership/customer service/communication consultant, professional keynote speaker, workplace trainer, author and implementation specialist who reinforces personalized messages with humor, passion, enthusiasm and authenticity. His mission is to help organization's translate their corporate culture into a workplace climate that inspires excellence. Bruce has degrees in both Safety Engineering and Occupational Safety and Health. Bruce recently completed a six year term as an elected member of the Board of Directors of the National Speakers Association and is one of fewer than 600 people worldwide to earn the prestigious Certified Speaking Professional (CSP) designation. As President and Chief Leadership Officer of Workplace Consultants, Inc. and Wilkinson Seminars and Presentations, he has presented in all 50 states, delivering enthusiastic messages for over twenty years to clients such as Sara Lee, Six Flags, Casino Magic, Hallmark Cards, Hershey's Chocolate, Xerox, ExxonMobil, State Farm Insurance, Cingular Wireless, Shell, Broyhill Furniture, Kellogg's, ConAgra, T.G.I. Friday's, various contractors, manufacturers, law firms, hospitals, school boards, convenience stores, associations, the Department of Defense, NASA, Jack Daniel's and Miller Brewing Company.



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# CHAPTER SEVEN

## Leadership and the Power of One

James L. McCarty

Welcome to chapter seven! I hope the Applied Leadership stories you have read to this point have triggered some great ideas you can use.

My name is Jim McCarty and I am about to take you further on your journey of leadership excellence. Let me begin by explaining the meaning of my chapter title, “Leadership and the Power of One.” Leadership success comes from understanding and applying the rules of The Power of One. The Power of One is your ability, as the leader of your group or organization, to gain 100 percent participation toward your vision and goals. Achieving your goal is to have a team who completely understands what you want to accomplish, what their individual role is to that end, what is in it for them, for the customer, and at the end of the day for... the company. When you achieve that team understanding and buy in, you and your team can accomplish “just about anything.” You have harnessed the Power of One!

### **A MINI-BACKGROUND ON JIM**

Allow me to give you a brief background about me in order to put some perspective on what I will share in the coming pages. I think this background will explain why my words might contribute some valid tips for you in your personal leadership quest.

Forty years ago—wow...that’s a long time—I joined an international company at an entry level service technician position. My educational background was a high school graduate from a small suburban school. My class ranking was 100 in a class of 200. My point? I was certainly no Einstein!

Forty years later, my position at retirement, was quite different. My title was Senior Executive Vice President of five corporate divisions.

Those businesses were accountable for producing \$1.2 billion per year in revenue. The five businesses had more than 4000 associates. During those forty years I had been promoted to every line management position in the company, eventually rising to the highest multi-division leadership position of this 20,000-person organization.

Let me make an important point right here. This chapter is not about me or my rise in the company. You will find this chapter is

ultimately *about you* and *for you*. You see, my success was because of what “other people” inside and outside the company did to help me. They taught me things I had never learned formally. They allowed me room to “spread my wings.” They encouraged me and kicked me in the pants when I needed it. They *always* lifted me up and they *never* put me down! So my intent in writing this chapter is to give you the same kind of help.

If you are reading this book for reinforcement of leadership in things you already do or to learn new things, I extend my compliments to you. You probably are already aware that getting the people around you to succeed *is* the highest leadership measurement. You achieve that success through continuous education.

So, here we go. You have been armed with my personal background. I also want to remind you that there are many different styles of leadership. What I will share with you is the style that I believed in and practiced with my associates—every single day of my career. It is a style your associates will respect, your supervisors will envy, and your competition will learn to despise you—I mean really despise you!

## **THE MOST IMPORTANT LEADERSHIP LESSON**

If you possess a formal marketing degree, you are already an expert on the 4-P’s of marketing. You have put countless hours into understanding Product, Price, Promotion and Placement. All are integral components of any successful marketing initiative.

However, without the fifth “P”—the Person—you will be doomed to only limited success. The most important leadership lesson is about your people—the people you lead, the people in your organization who support you, the people you report to, and the people you call your customers. Leadership is about all of these people. Your success and that of your company is also about all of these people. The fifth P—the Person—is the most important reality *any* leader must learn and use in the execution of their leadership role.

I owe my leadership success to the 20/20 recognition that it’s about taking care of your people! First, the people who are your associates and then the people you call your customers. Customers come second? Yes, *second!* If you as a leader take care of your people, they in return will do the same for your customers. Believe me and in my forty years of application of this principle—it works! This simple fact is very hard for many practicing leaders to understand—to their detriment and that of their businesses.



I would submit that leadership is about knowing the people on your team—really *knowing* them. If this statement has any accuracy to it then I will begin sharing ideas with you on how to connect with your people and your customers.

## **WHY DO WE WORK...BECAUSE WE LOVE OUR JOB?**

Here is a fun exercise you can use the next time you are in front of a group of your associates. I have used it on thousands of people during the last few years. Ask your group this question: *Why do you come to work?* I have found in my experience that after a couple of meek “I love my job responses” it *always* comes down to, “Make money!” What is *your* reason? More than likely, the same, “To make money.” Why make money? Well, for starters to provide shelter, food, security, and a financial future for you and for those you love.

I always shift gears with the group at this point by making the following promise: Since making money is the unanimous response, I promise the audience that they will leave the meeting with more money than when they arrived. It is a pretty good chance that no one in the room has ever attended a meeting where they left with more money than they had when they arrived. Remember, we just learned that people work for “money.” So a promise to leave with more money has great appeal.

Don’t be concerned with how much you will have to spend to make this promise come true. I will explain that to you a little later.

## **THE STORY OF THE TWO-DOLLAR BILL**

The next step is to hold up a brand new two-dollar bill and a brand new one-dollar bill. Now ask the important question: “What is the difference between the two-dollar bill and the one-dollar bill?” The answers are always the same, even if they vary slightly they can be summarized in the following words: First, the two-dollar bill is more valuable—twice as valuable. Your next question: does a two-dollar bill look like a one-dollar bill? Of course not, your audience will tell you that they look different—they have different presidents pictured on them, different numbers, and, well, you get it. The final question: is the two-dollar bill a common form of currency? The answer? No! It is very rare and also quite unique.

So remember the findings from this exercise: the two-dollar bill is more valuable, it looks different, and it is rare and unique. We

will return to these findings at the end of this chapter and tie those findings in to an important leadership talent.

## **CHANGE YOUR MIND—CHANGE YOUR LIFE**

Change your mind and you will change your life. Life is all about choices. It has been said that all businesses have essentially two choices: Grow or die! Are you standing still and allowing your competition to pass you? Or are you making the necessary choices to grow your business? It does not take a rocket scientist to make the right choice: *Growth!* If growth is the right choice, what should you be doing? After all, *you* are the leader!

## **THREE PROVEN LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES**

Allow me to share my three proven leadership strategies. I can sum them up in three easy to remember words—words that you, the leader, can use to cause your people to focus on things they should be doing to produce profitable growth in *any* business.

The three easy words are *Retain*, *Grow*, and *Gain*. These are three easily communicated words and business strategies for you the leader to direct your organization.

Before I explain these three strategies, allow me to give you some historical perspective on them. It was ten years ago that I first introduced these three strategies to our company management team. I wanted to martial the forces of thousands of associates. I wanted them to connect their individual job responsibilities to our multi-divisional goals. I accomplished that goal with these three words: *Retain*, *Grow*, and *Gain*.

Now let me explain their significance. The *Retain* strategy means to Retain your associates, your customers, your culture, and traditions that have made your company what it is today. The *Grow* strategy means to invest in the growth of your associates, it also relates to growing the number of services and products you have with your existing customers. Finally, it references the growing of the top line, margins, financial ratios, and bottom-line—the financial measurements of your company's performance. The *Gain* strategy refers to gaining new associates for your company—new associates with new competencies and experiences. *Gain* also means to focus on gaining new market share from both the marketplace and...your competition. The most important *Gain* strategy is the gaining of new ideas for services and products that do not exist today. The key is to Gain these new ideas from your own people, your own customers, your own prospects and...your competition! It is important to note that

each of these three strategies begins with focus on your people. You will find out why as we go forward together.

## **LOOKING CLOSER AT THESE THREE STRATEGIES**

Let's spend some time looking individually at each of three strategies. We will begin with the *Retain* strategy. I have spent the past forty years learning from and listening to the people I have had the pleasure to lead. That experience has left an indelible lesson about leadership with me and I want to give it to you. I would like to share three more words and one of the most important skills a leader must use. Here they are: *Communicate, Communicate, Communicate!* Wow...that's pretty simple! It's also pretty obvious! If so, why is poor management communication from supervisors, managers, and business leaders the most frequently expressed complaint heard from the rank and file in so many company employee attitude surveys? The reason is that the rule on communication is known to all but, practiced by so few.

It's been said that people quit supervisors. They seldom quit companies. Do you think that poor management communication is part of the problem? I do!

Perhaps you are wondering why the multiple emphasis on the word *Communicate*? I have learned through the years that the expression, "I know that you heard what I said; but I am not sure that what you heard is what I meant." If I can translate that last thought, you must *continuously* repeat your message by saying it or writing it over and over, almost to the point where your people are sick of hearing you say it and at that point, start all over again.

## **MORE ON THE RETAIN STRATEGY: GET THE MESSAGE OUT**

I want to share one of my favorite, low-cost communication methods I have used for over a decade. It was my way of communicating with thousands of associates in the businesses I lead on a regular basis. First, at a minimum of once or twice a year I would go into the field and meet every single person within my business units. These would be meetings with twenty-five, fifty, 150, 500, and more people per meeting. My business associates had a chance to hear me speak about what we were doing right and what we can do better. They would also be given our business results and business goals going forward. My communication follow up to the meetings were my "May I Ride with You" recordings. They were sent out about every three months. They were twenty-five to thirty minutes in length. These messages were conversational in tone and were not a scripted

presentation. Since everyone in my businesses had met and heard me they knew the voice and ideas on the recordings belonged to me. I always included a self-addressed, pre-paid post card with each recording. The purpose of the recordings was to request feedback or ideas from our associates. My typical post card response averaged around 75 percent, slightly higher than from your average direct mail message. Now, think about the reason for the “May I Ride with You” message? *Communicate, Communicate, Communicate!*

## **USING ENCOURAGEMENT AS A LEADERSHIP TOOL**

Are you still wondering why such heavy focus on communication? Someone once said that encouragement is oxygen for the soul. Have you ever worked or tried harder at your job because someone’s words of encouragement spurred you to do so? Do you as a leader use encouragement as a daily leadership tool? If you do, congratulations. If you don’t, you are missing the boat. Remember: *Communicate, Communicate, Communicate.*

What type of communication is more powerful: oral or written? Let me ask you a different question. Do you have a file somewhere holding the many letters and notes of personal recognition you have received throughout your career? I have asked that question to more than 20,000 people during the last three years. The response: ninety-five percent of the people said, “Yes.” I always ask them why they have saved those letters and notes. The number one answer is, “They make me feel great every time I reread them.”

The second question I asked this same 20,000 people is to raise their hand if *they* send at least three letters or notes of encouragement to *their* people each month? The response from more than 20,000 people to that question? Less than four percent raised their hand!

When I asked, “Why not?” The answer was always the same. Before I share their answer what is *your* answer? Everyone universally agreed, “I just don’t have the time.”

A few years ago I had to address some 400 plus division managers of a business unit I was returning to as their new general manager. A few weeks prior to my first meeting with this group I had a small printing company create an attractive post card reflecting our company image. It had photos of our people standing next our company service vehicles in front of a typical customer’s place of business.

I took some 400 plus of these post cards and hand-printed a personal message to each of these 400 plus managers. I finished each post card with a P.S. at the bottom thanking their spouses by name for their support of the company. I mailed the post cards two weeks prior to the meeting.

When the meeting date arrived I was the first speaker of the conference. I was on the stage, at the lectern, speaking on the topic of this chapter: Leadership and Communication. I stepped down from the stage and walked up the center aisle of the meeting room. I put an image up on the screen of a letter sent to me by the founder of our company some 30 plus years earlier. Everyone recognized his name. It was at that point when I asked the assembled company management team the same question I just asked you. Raise your hand if you have a file filled with letters of recognition or encouragement from people you respect? Four hundred plus hands immediately responded by reaching for the ceiling! I asked them why they kept their file. Once again, the answer came back, because they felt good every time they reread the messages and thought about the sender and the senders' words.

You are probably way ahead of me at this point and know my next question. That question: raise your hand if you send three similar letters or notes to *your* staff or peers? The response: ten people out of 400 plus raised their hands! I asked why? The answer was the same, "I just don't have the time."

## **MAKING THE POINT ABOUT LACK OF TIME**

It was at that point when I took the management team down a different path. Still standing in the center aisle of the audience I made a statement. Two weeks ago I sent a "few" post cards to some people in this room for whom I have the highest respect. Now, I am not trying to embarrass anyone, but if you received one of my cards I would like you to stand up now. Four hundred plus people rose to their feet in complete unison.

Then they began to laugh and asked the people next to them if they really had received a card, too. I then asked the audience if the card made them feel good or bad? Universally the response was, "Good!"

I asked them why? The comments were numerous, from, "You thanked my spouse by name," to the fact that I had written the card out by hand. I tried to tease the person who made that comment by saying I actually produced the cards by computer. That individual came back with, "No you didn't." I asked him how

he knew that and he said he ran it under the kitchen faucet and the ink ran. He was right—all 400 plus cards had been written out by hand.

I then asked the group if they thought I had the time to write 400 plus cards by hand? They said, “No.” I also said “no.” However, the difference to me was it was not about *time* it was about *desire* and if you have the *desire* you can always find the *time*.

I reminded our management team, and I want to also remind each of you reading this chapter, that the 400 plus hands raised earlier had validated the power of written words of recognition and encouragement—they got the message. I hope you have, too! One more time: *Communicate, Communicate, Communicate*. All you need to do, as a leader is to have the *Desire!*

I have shared just a few real examples of how easy it is to execute the *Retain* strategy with your associates. These same examples apply to your customers, too.

## **GROW STRATEGY EXAMPLES...**

Let’s move onto the *Grow* strategy. I want to speak first about growing your management associates.

There are typically two management outcomes in the performance of one’s management responsibilities. One is what the leader was *Expecting* from that manager and the other is what the leader is *willing to Accept!* I like to refer to the distance between these two data points as the *Management Gap!* You as the leader have the responsibility and, I might suggest, the opportunity to close this gap—to get management’s results closer to what you are expecting. I have found that once you begin to accept less than what you originally wanted future results will only get worse. Unless, of course, you let the manager know in writing you are not going to accept less than you expect in the future.

## **LEADERSHIP REQUIRES YOU WEAR A HARD HAT**

How well do your departments and divisions get along with each other? Allow me to share another visual example. Imagine a group of grain silos, about eight of them, standing in the middle of a Midwest field. They are made from concrete and reinforcement rods—very sturdy, standing almost 100 feet tall. Now, look into your own company. Do you have any “silos” present in your company? If you do, they are probably not made of concrete and reinforcement rod—they are probably made of *People*. Even

though they are not made of concrete they are likely just as strong. They are silos that divide! Examples are, marketing versus sales, manufacturing versus research, customer service versus logistics, sales versus service, finance versus technology, planners versus the executors—one group against the other group. Does any of this sound the least bit familiar?

Your job as a successful leader is to literally take a wrecking ball and break those silos of division and smash the silos of separatism. Why? Because all of these functions and groups need to be on the same page if you wish to really grow your business through customer intimacy.

Now a comment here about connecting leadership and hard hats: Try heading into your next staff meeting with a hard hat on your head and a sledge hammer in your hand. Your team will quickly understand what you mean when they look at your meeting agenda and see topic number one is titled “Demolishing Silos in our Company.”

## **LEADERS TALK TO EVERYONE AND TO ANYONE**

I would like to share some personal leadership steps that you can take to speed up the process of demolishing company silos. First, company silos usually rise up due to the *Lack of Communication* between line and functional managers. If you are not talking to me or to my staff, you have given me reason by default to “circle my wagons” or, in our example, “build my silo”!

You can get out in front of this potential problem by remembering the ultimate rule of leadership—*Communicate, Communicate, Communicate!*

I made frequent trips into every corporate staff and functional department. My purpose always two-fold: first to thank the people in each department for helping our business units succeed. Secondly, to ask them how our management team might make it easier for them to service our business units, associates, and customers. The people and functions I spoke with truly appreciated the visits; they also appreciated the time to thank everyone. Did I have the time to make these visits? Go ahead, you have the answer—I had the desire, and the time took care of itself. If you are a leader or manager, you can do the same thing too.

Part of the reason for your company’s success, and customer *Growth* will be the by-product, when your employees feel appreciated. The phrase, “Share of customer, not just Share of Market,” will have new meaning. What I describe here is what I

refer to as “100 percent Participation ” meaning everyone in your company is pulling for profitable growth.

## **FINDING A SILVER BULLET “PROGRAM” TO LEADERSHIP**

Have you been searching for a simple program that will achieve this goal of getting everyone on the same page, or as I call it, “100 percent Participation ”? Before you waste too much of your time searching for that kind of answer, allow me to share a personal story to this point.

This story happened a few years ago. I was in Kentucky on a speaking engagement. I had about an hour before I was going to address a management group on the topic of customer service. I walked across the street from the hotel to the lobby of a local bank. As I entered the bank I noticed a cardboard sign sitting on the receptionist’s desk. The sign read, in large, bold letters, “We Listen—Personal Caring Service!” I immediately thought that if I could get one of those signs, I could use it in my upcoming presentation. I would be able to make the point that even banks are focused on customer care.

When I asked the receptionist if they had an extra sign I was told that the only person who could give me something like that was Mr. Higginbottom, the bank President. I asked if he was present and the receptionist pointed to a glass enclosed office on the far side of the bank’s marble lobby.

I asked the receptionist to ask Mr. Higginbottom, on my behalf, if the bank had a sign to spare. I watched intently as the receptionist took the sign off of the desk and went over to Mr. Higginbottom’s office. Mr. Higginbottom was seated at his desk with his one leg up on one of the desk drawers. He sat up when the receptionist entered. The receptionist showed the sign to him and then pointed to me across the lobby. He looked my way and I waved back with a broad smile hoping that I might influence his decision. He waved back, turning, dispatching the receptionist with his head shaking up and down. The receptionist came quickly across the lobby, waving the sign and smiling at me. The receptionist then handed me the sign and said, “The President said that you may have this sign, because *we are not on that program anymore!*” I stood there not quite sure what to say other than, “You are not on that program anymore?”

Her response was a resounding, “No!”

“You are not listening anymore or giving personal caring service?”

“No,” she again replied.



The key operative word is “Program.”

It helped reinforce my belief today that it is not about “programs”—it is about “people”—it is about treating people as human beings, not the “Program of the month.” It is necessary to have business and associate processes that will stand the test of time.

I once heard the founder of Chick-fil-A restaurant chain give a tip on how to tell if a person needed encouragement. He said you could tell a person could use some encouragement “if they were still alive.” Pretty good point and right on target!

## **GAIN STRATEGY EXAMPLES**

Since I am only contributing a brief chapter to this book on Applied Leadership I had better move along to my *Gain* Strategy. Let’s begin with a couple of my *Gain* strategy points that might help you on your leadership journey.

Here is an important statement, “If you always do what you have always done, then you always get, what you have always got.” That is a pretty strong case for the importance of introducing change into your organization. *Gain* new ideas for business and personal growth in your organization.

Try this exercise with your direct reports at your next staff meeting. Write my three growth strategies on a white board. *Retain, Grow, Gain!* Then go around the table asking examples of actions/decisions that your team has done differently in the past six to twelve months that are driving profitable growth or associate development? List them under the appropriate heading on the white board.

Here is an example question: What recent changes have you made in your business process that will improve retention of your associates or customers? List these changes under the *Retain* column. Carry on with the questions and process until you have covered all three of the named strategies: *Retain, Grow, & Gain*.

What you are looking for is evidence of change during the past six to twelve months. If you were able to list numerous significant changes the next question is are they making a difference in your business results?

If the exercise reveals there are only a handful of new initiatives, not to worry! I would begin by saying, “Fantastic!” because you and your management team have at least taken the time to look into the “business mirror” of your organization. You can now ponder this thought, “Don’t expect different results from the same behavior.” I wish you and your team well with your

search for business improvement.

## **RETURNING TO THE TWO-DOLLAR BILL**

Do you remember my earlier story on the difference between the one-dollar bill and the two-dollar bill? What was the answer that I received when I asked my management group about them? The two-dollar bill is more valuable, it looks different, it is unique and it is rare. These are the very attributes you want to *Gain* in your product line and your service offerings. These attributes will allow you to *Gain* market share and beat your competition.

Now it is time to have a little fun with your management team. Tell them you are going to give each one of them a memory peg to this two-dollar bill story. Then give each of them a brand new two-dollar bill with your signature across the front of the bill. Tell them that they must keep your two-dollar bill to serve as a reminder of how they are to judge future positive changes—by recognizing which changes would be perceived in the marketplace to be more valuable, look different, to be unique or rare.

If you want to get a chuckle, tell them you have their home addresses and have already contacted the closest Starbucks to their homes. You have instructed those Starbucks locations to be on the alert for your brand new two-dollar bills bearing your signature. If someone attempts to use one toward a purchase of coffee, they are to immediately report that person to you! Just having a little fun.

Now someone reading this chapter is probably wondering where you can still get brand new two-dollar bills. Go to your local bank and they will order them for you from the nearest Federal Reserve Bank.

## **YOU ARE WHO YOU ARE, WHEN YOU ARE ALONE**

The above heading states why you should consider all of the focus I have placed in this chapter on paying attention to your people. It is a leadership phrase that I first used more than thirty years ago. It is truer today, than it was in the 1970s. Allow me to repeat it: You are who you are, when you are alone.

The ultimate goal of any successful leader is to have their people carry on with the planned mission even in the absence of their leader. A leader can accomplish that result when your team believes in you and trusts you—when they also believe the place you want them to go is a good place for them and a good place for their customers. You see, your ultimate goal as a leader is to gain 100 percent participation from everyone on your team and to

have each of them strive to deliver on your expectations of them. People enjoy doing this and are happy to perform well because they know you appreciate their contributions!

Finally, I want to genuinely thank you for the time you have invested in reading my chapter of this book, Applied Leadership. Remember this important point: leadership and business success does not come from amassing new ideas for the future; it comes from the willingness of you the leader to *execute* these new ideas. I wish you the very best in your personal execution of the ideas you find worthy between the front and back cover of this book. My hope is that you have found a few of those ideas worthy of execution in Chapter Seven.

If I can be of any further help just send me an email: [jimpwrofone@aol.com](mailto:jimpwrofone@aol.com). I am trying to “Pay it forward” from all the wonderful people who helped me in my personal journey for leadership success. You are the best—Jim McCarty.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The author, James (Jim) McCarty, is the former Senior Executive Vice President of Ecolab, Inc. Ecolab is a St. Paul, MN based company with Global sales of approximately \$4 billion dollars. Jim began his career with Ecolab as a service technician, with a high school education. During his 40 year career with Ecolab he was promoted to every line management position in the organization. When he retired he was responsible for 5 operating divisions, 4000+ associates, and revenue of \$1.2 billion dollars. He credits his rise in a company of 20.000+ people to his supervisors and associates who taught him the things that he had never learned formally. They lifted him up and...never put him down! He will share many of those practices in Chapter 7 of *Applied Leadership*. Since his retirement, he has become a member of the National Speakers Association and enjoys sharing his successful techniques on Leadership and The Power of One across North America. He is a frequent guest lecturer at the University of Chicago's Graduate School of Business and also at the University of Minnesota's Carlson School of Management. He also works with many large and small corporate businesses helping them with their leadership and growth challenges. His tested business ideas will help you further your own pursuit of leadership improvement. If you are a present leader of people or seek to rise to a position of leadership in the future...Jim will give you proven ideas to help you on that personal journey. You will leave Jim's chapter with ideas that you will be able to put to work for you and your organization...the same day! Jim's ultimate goal is to "give back" to others what they have given to him during his leadership growth journey.



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# CHAPTER EIGHT

## Trio of Extraordinary Leadership: Passion, Compassion, and Action

Mary Frances Arnold, Ph.D.

In developing yourself as a leader three questions must be answered: why, do I want to become a leader? What does it take to be a leader given today's challenges and how will my leadership make a difference in the world? As you answer these questions for yourself, you will discover your passion, your compassion, and your capacity to action.

This chapter is a practical approach to leadership assessment, goal setting, and achievable action plans that will enable you to grow your passion, clarify your goals, and become the leader you want and deserve to be.

You will read the words "compassion, passion," and "action" throughout this chapter. These words encompass the meaning of being an extraordinary leader. Many people can be taught to lead, to develop leadership skills, and to implement them with some success. However, in order to become a great leader, someone who truly captures and inspires others, one must have a complete package of "skills" that are given through art. It is in the art of leadership that average leaders become exceptional leaders. The envelope of compassion, passion, and action will lead you to implement leadership as both a skill and an art.

The art of leadership involves becoming an extraordinary leader—an individual leading with integrity. Leadership integrity means living out your passion, harnessing your compassion, and putting your values into action, which will drive you to become the leader your institutions, organizations, careers and your community need in today's complex world.

### **PASSION**

Passion is the obvious starting point, because without it only ordinary leadership can be attained at best. My goal here is to help you become an extraordinary leader. What is it that you are passionate about? Some people find this a hard question to answer. The questions below are designed to help you define your passion or passion(s). It should be noted that you might be passionate about more than one thing. And, your passion may evolve and change as you gain experience in your area of interest as well as your own life development. These are all natural and

valued aspects and I encourage you to welcome them with an open mind and heart.

## **Importance of Passion**

In order to become an extraordinary leader you must know what you are passionate about and where your passion comes from. Passion and life meaning are often linked. It is about what is in your soul, what you feel driven to do, and ultimately, what makes your own life interesting to yourself and others. Passion speaks to and from the core of who you are as an individual and often determines how you will navigate your life.

Knowing what you are passionate about will help you determine why you want to be a leader. Passion tends to be the driving force behind your commitment to seek and attain goals. It is what makes you hold on to your dreams when faced with challenges. Through passion, solutions are found to seemingly insurmountable obstacles. With any great pursuit, challenges are inevitable; passion will move you through obstacles toward the goal. Extraordinary leaders are those whose passion inspires others to act. Effective change happens when passion is involved.

There are many defining aspects of passion. One of my favorites is that with fire in our hearts, we can enjoy the journey toward our goals rather than only being interested in the outcome. When you are in the mindset of only being happy when your goal is attained, you will be highly disappointed—even if you surpass the intended outcome. Extraordinary leaders value the process and celebrate the accomplishments of others along the way to the goal. It is the journey that has the most meaning, attaining the goal is just the prize.

Lance Armstrong is an excellent example of this concept in action. After being diagnosed with cancer, having a brain tumor removed, going through chemotherapy and fighting for his very life, he trained for and won his sixth Tour De France. “Impossible” many would say. Almost having his passion—bicycle racing—taken from him by cancer, he learned to be mindful throughout his training, appreciating the good days and working hard through the tough ones. Not only did he win what is considered to be one of, if not the most grueling, sporting events in the world he also became a leader for cancer research, cancer survivors, and their friends and family. He is a leader on a bike, a leader in funding cancer research and providing hope for a cure, and a human being who is living with passion!

## **Identifying Your Passion**

Determining what you are passionate about may come easily for some yet it takes time and thoughtful questioning for others. Allowing the idea of finding your passion to form may help to create answers. It is easy to get stuck in patterns of daily routines and cultural norms. Stepping away from these patterns and norms to identify areas of passion may lead you to a more meaningful life. Try answering the questions listed below and let your imagination wander as you consider what truly matters to you.

- What makes you want to get out of bed in the morning (besides coffee if you are a coffee drinker)?
- What makes you smile simply with a thought of it?
- If you didn't have to work or study, how is it that you would spend your time?
- When you hear yourself talking about different interests or pursuits, what makes the energy in the telling come through strong?
- About what do you find yourself talking longer than most other topics?
- What would you be willing to give up sleep for?
- What is meaningful to you?
- If you had six months to live, what would you do with your time?
- If you could do anything in the world with no negative consequences, what would you do?
- Imagine you have a crystal ball and you can make your life into anything you want it to be, what images would appear in the crystal ball?

These are just some questions you can ask yourself to help determine where your greatest passion(s) lie.

I encourage you to answer these questions with complete honesty. Omit judgment from your mind. Do not listen to the voices of others that you may hear in your head. Consider all your thoughts important. Know that what energizes you is valuable. You do not have to be on a mission to save the world in order for your interests to be pursued or for you to become a great leader. Too often we sell ourselves short or negate our own interests because we tell ourselves they aren't important enough. Think about Olympic team athletes, for example. Is their pursuit of excellence in sport worthy? You bet it is. When we reach to our greatest potential and rally others to move toward theirs, then the pursuit in itself is valuable.

## **Passion and Congruency**



Congruency is a term used to describe a state in which our thoughts and feelings match our behavior. In a world full of demands from many sources—social norms, family, culture, media, religious institutions, politics, and education it is easy to be lost in what one thinks one “should” do—what is worthy of pursuit from others’ eyes. Passion is not based in “shoulds”; it is about whom you are all on your own. Your unique gifts, passions, and values will bring your leadership qualities and skills alive in ways that feel natural to you. True lasting passion can only be sustained when it is congruent with who you are at your very essence.

## **Expressing your passion**

Let your passion shine through your every pore. Let it “contaminate” as many people as possible. If you feel energy building in your fiery belly then speak it, put it to work—make good use of it.

Another defining aspect of passion is your courage to share your energy with others. This is where the art of leadership lies. Even if the person you are speaking with does not share your interest, your enthusiasm for your own pursuits will likely ignite his or her passion or at least spark thoughts. Allow yourself to observe how others respond to your passion. Do their eyes light up too? Is their physical posture more animated? Just notice what your impact is on others—those you lead and strangers alike. You will find that as a leader, your passionate energy will inspire others to action.

## **Passion and Overcoming Challenges**

Like the author who experiences writer’s block, challenges will arise in your pursuit of your passion. How you respond to those challenges often dictates the direction of your vision. What separates ordinary leaders from extraordinary leaders is that the latter create opportunities from what appear to be deal-breakers.

Perseverance is one of the most powerful tools any leader can implement. In order to overcome challenges, one must dig into their passion. We need to know why we are tackling this challenge—what makes it worth the journey? When obstacles arise, and they will, digging into your deepest interest and desire for your pursuit will give you the strength to journey onward in the most difficult times. Having an action plan to follow when the road becomes difficult will assist you in working through the challenges. Having the answers to the following questions may be

useful:

- Why am I pursuing this goal?
- What are the three most meaningful aspects of this pursuit?
- If I quit now, how will I feel about myself? How would that feeling impact my future endeavors?
- How would I respond to this situation if my energy were not drained, or if I felt stronger?
- What will the impact be on others?

When your resources are tapped out and when your dream feels out of reach, it is critical to re-group, re-evaluate, take a step back, and replenish. Many leaders make the mistake of pushing so hard that they have nothing left in themselves to keep going. They burn out which results in either dropping the goal altogether, being sloppy, or not excelling in the way they otherwise would. Adding breaks to your day, taking days off, spending time with friends, or otherwise getting some distance from what you are working on will often make your work of higher quality and more efficient when you return to it.

## **Passion and Commitment**

Making a commitment to a vision—to a pursuit—is necessary to propel one forward through joy, challenge, opportunity, productivity, and perseverance. With commitment comes the courage to journey forward. The following are related words of wisdom from W. H. Murray, Leader of the 1952 Scottish Ascent of Mount Everest:

“Until one is committed there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back, always ineffectiveness. Concerning all acts of initiative (and creation) there is one elementary truth, the ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans: that the moment one definitely commits oneself, then Providence moves too. All sorts of things occur to help one that would never otherwise have occurred. A whole stream of events issues from the decision raising in one’s favor all manner of unforeseen incidents and meetings and material assistance which no man could have dreamt would have come his way. I have learned a deep respect for one of Goethe’s couplets, ‘Whatever you can do, or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power and magic in it.’ ”

From the moment of commitment one may feel herself/himself soar where he or she otherwise might not. It is in the commitment to one’s pursuit that movement is propelled, doors are opened, creativity emerges, and action taken.

Clarity around your passion and vision is the first step toward putting this plan into action, and yet we are not, and refuse to be, alone in creating a better organization, community, and ultimately a better world. Understanding this world, human nature, and others of similar and diverse backgrounds and experiences allows our compassion to be the second cornerstone of becoming extraordinary leaders.

## **COMPASSION**

In this fast-paced and competitive world compassion for self and others is all too often overlooked. Yet, the very essence of being a remarkable leader, building quality relationships, having self-confidence, creating community, and living a life connected with self and others is compassion.

Compassion for self and others is the human dynamic of respect and integrity necessary for a peaceful world. It is hard to imagine that such a life-sustaining component is seldom rewarded. As a result, we are less likely to capture, grow, and utilize this critical concept. Skilled and artful leaders know how crucial compassion is and they make it a part of their daily lives.

### **The Value of Compassion**

Compassion is what connects us to self, others, and community. It is the art of being able to reach out to others and to ourselves. We connect with one another with our hearts much more than with our minds. Compassion is from the heart. It is a heart-speak of sorts. If connection with others, community, and care are important to you, then you most likely experience compassion.

While this concept may be innate to a certain extent, it can also be learned as we move outside of our comfort zones to connect with those who are different than we are to understand the world in which we live and ultimately know ourselves. Knowing ourselves and understanding the greater world in which we live means there is no longer one right way to live.

Many leaders struggle with, and sadly, strive for, perfection. This is one reason why too many individuals don't get beyond the starting line. Having perfection as your standard of success sets the stage for failure. Expectation of perfection is the quickest way to bring about intense fear and anxiety, which often results in mental paralysis. We become so afraid of imperfection—of what we have outlined as failing—that we don't even get started.

The saddest part of this set-up for paralysis or "failure" is that it

is not necessary. We make ourselves suffer when, in reality, it is in our imperfection that our greatest learning and growth occur. If we allow for mistakes and for other perspectives we open up a world of possibility. This is true for leaders of all groups, businesses, organizations, teams, athletes, and individuals as architects of their own lives.

Part of compassion is caring for self and others as unique and creative beings. When we expect perfection or one “right way” of being from those we lead, we also set them up for failure. It is the quickest way to squelch energy, motivation, and enthusiasm.

We can empower others in one quick but definitive statement about expectations that will allow for imperfection and uniqueness. Inspiring the best in others and in ourselves requires compassion for the process of learning and growth, as individuals and as a team. We are all works in progress and so too are the people we are leading. We are similar to a blank canvas—ourselves and our experiences are the painters. We create strokes of color with some more beautiful than others, but in the end it is a blending of *all* the strokes that creates the art.

## **Compassion and Diversity**

The world is full of a limitless diversity of people and possibilities. Artful leaders value the unique qualities of individuals and cultures. Artful leaders inspire individuals to embrace their own uniqueness. Artful leaders encourage others to embrace the diversity of all individuals and recognize the qualities of each person. It is through recognition and embracing that artful leaders bring out the best unique characteristics in each individual to create a team or organization of excellence.

In theory this sounds like an easy thing to do, however, history has countless examples of the struggles people have with each other connecting across difference. So how do exceptional leaders bridge differences? That question is answered in volumes of literature and research; however, I will provide simplistic answers that should then be followed up with ongoing learning.

Effective leaders honestly confront their own biases and actively work to change stereotypes and negative associations about groups of people. They get to know people as individuals rather than as a stereotyped group. From knowing the individual, great leaders then create positive associations with those groups whom they may have previously undervalued. This learning process allows leaders to extend beyond hurt and hate to inclusion and community. This entire process is best undertaken

with compassion for self and others as works in progress.

Effective leaders also recognize and celebrate the diverse skills, knowledge, and experience of individuals and blend those aspects from each member of an organization to create excellence. Inviting difference and surrounding oneself with skills different from one's own is a sign of strength and intelligence in both the skill and art of leading. Skill is in recognizing the power of individual differences; art is in blending those differences together creating an unbeatable team.

It is also essential to assess yourself as a leader and to assess your level of compassion for your own merits. There are many different leadership styles and the one you develop needs to be unique to you. Leadership styles encompass values, skills, education, knowledge, integrity, charisma, and communication.

Determining a style that is your own is the best of your passion and compassion. This assessment may be an ongoing process, yet I encourage you to be true to your uniqueness and allow yourself to develop your leadership style that is compassionate to all the similarities and differences you share with other leaders.

## **Compassion and Relationships in Leadership**

Relationships are at the essence of what leadership is about. There can be no community without relationships and there can be no positive relationships without caring; and without compassion, there is no caring. Thus, effective leaders must implement relationship-building skills through a sense of care and compassion for others.

Many people talk about the need for leaders to network. The concept of networking is one in which people are trying to benefit from each other—what I can do for you and what you can do for me. This concept has always left me feeling cold and dreading “networking.” Rather than networking, I see effective leaders as people who build relationships, who truly care about one another and who get to know each other on multiple levels.

Collaboration and celebration of diversity is possible from a multi-level place of caring for one another. To this end, I encourage you to be curious about other people, to ask questions about them, and to intensely listen to what they have to say. Be interested and take the time to learn to care about those beyond you. If this is a stretch for you, then leadership may not be for you. Leadership is about relationships.

In this self-promoting, competitive world in which we live, it is tempting to only relate to people who can do something for us.

This is a terribly limiting perspective on what leadership means and what it can accomplish. It is also a self-serving and shortsighted vision that is liable to accomplish very little.

Meaningful connections with others within and outside of your area of interest provide an opportunity to increase the quality of your leadership journey by enhancing purpose and increasing skills. We learn from each and every interaction we have with others. Observing others in their craft, talking with them about their values, their knowledge and experiences enhances our own and we make great friends in the process. Our pursuits are immediately benefited by each and every interaction we share with another human being, even when those interactions are uncomfortable. The times we step outside our comfort zones can be when we grow the most.

### **Compassion with Integrity**

In our connections with others it is imperative we maintain and practice leadership with integrity. While in leadership roles, our actions have a powerful impact on others. Journeying as leaders with integrity builds respect, increases meaning, is empowering for others, builds trust, and is a model for all to act with integrity.

Leaders are always in a position of role modeling whether they acknowledge it or not. People watch closely what leaders do. These same people care far more about what leaders do than what they say—it is the behavior that is modeled far more than the words that are said. As such, leaders need to be cognizant of the parallel of their words and actions. If the two become skewed, it is time to take a step back and look at your values, beliefs, and goals and whether or not your current path matches your vision.

Leading with integrity empowers others to do the same and continues to lead toward the betterment of all. When your leadership is seamless with the actions of those you lead, then you know you are empowering them. It may be tempting at times to grab the reigns of power with all your might but that is a position of weakness. While the news is filled with leadership lacking integrity, there are yet plenty of positive examples and success.

When a group of people are empowered by their leaders and encouraged to use all their skills and abilities, then the team or organization is working at its best. True leaders give credit where it is due, to the whole, as all work together to attain goals.

Like many of us, our leadership is inspired through the modeling and acts of others. If you develop solid relationships and inspire

others to do their best, while providing tools and skills, you will never be alone as you move forward. As you take time to acknowledge others' progress and compliment them in their pursuits, as a leader you will facilitate a winning process. Even if the goal for the day, the week, or the month isn't attained, leading in this manner will create an atmosphere where individuals and groups will attain their objectives. A byproduct of empowering others is that you will also empower yourself. Many of us have been taught a win/lose mentality, but the stronger position is when two or more individuals get to win or succeed at the same time. Celebrating success is always sweeter when more than one is gathered, and isn't that what compassion is all about?

When working with an organization or team of people, integrity of the group may be carried out individually but leaders have the ultimate responsibility. As a leader you need to know if your own values and belief systems align with that of the organization or group. If it's a match, great, keep going. If there is one or more aspect of the mission and vision of the organization without your own sense of integrity, it is incumbent upon you to either work with the organization to align the two or bow out of the job/leadership position. You are the only one who can give your integrity away—it cannot be taken from you. Effective leaders are vigilant gatekeepers of their integrity. Effective organizations experience integrity throughout the fabric of all they do, and in this way organizational compassion is created.

## **Defining success**

The ultimate meaning of "success" must be defined by each individual and each group or organization. Success is determined by many things and should be judged on the merits of individual and group goals. Determinants of what is successful may rest within each mini-goal on the path to achieving the larger dream. In fact, you will build momentum and re-energize each other and yourself when you acknowledge and appreciate progress. The greatest success of all is in attempting to do your best, enjoying the journey, and celebrating the small and large accomplishments.

## **Compassion and Self-Talk**

Compassion for others is challenging unless you can experience compassion for yourself. How many of us can quickly list our weaknesses and sit in silence when asked to list our gifts, our strengths? The messages leaders send to themselves may have a

direct impact on their progress, productivity, effectiveness, and ultimately to whether or not their goals are achieved. We have choices about how we talk to ourselves. I believe what others say to us can be hurtful, and what we say to ourselves can lift us up beyond measure. Do you have an ally within, or an enemy within? Making an active choice about what messages you send to yourself will assist you in taking responsibility for your self-talk. You can be your greatest asset or your greatest liability. Actively choosing to be your best ally will help you soar through your journey, approaching each part of the process with greater energy and “can do” attitude. Exude confidence in yourself and others will be more likely to be confident in you.

While providing mental performance coaching for elite athletes I have come to fully appreciate the power of positive talk to improve performance. These athletes learn that when they send themselves messages such as, “I can’t,” or “I’m not good enough, others are better. I’ll never get there. I am stupid for making that mistake,” those messages become self-fulfilling prophecies. If you are constantly telling yourself that you cannot achieve something, you likely will fall short of your goals or even worse, you will not even get started. In such scenarios your dreams are squelched before they ever get off the ground. Henry Ford employed this principle too as he indicated in his statement: “Think you can or think you can’t, either way, you’ll be right.”

The alternative to negative self-talk is to send yourself affirming messages. This is often easier said than done. The first step is to make a decision that your intention is to be positive—you are worthy. This active decision then will help you take responsibility for the messages you send yourself. Tune in to your head, so to speak, and become aware of what you are saying to yourself about your leadership abilities and your goals. In the beginning notice the messages, patterns, and ways that you both build yourself up and tear yourself down. As you gain awareness you can then work to continue positive messages, stop negative ones, and create strategies to build your “I can” attitude.

Positive self-talk and compassion toward oneself are skills that can be learned. Like any useful skill, it takes practice and intention to stick with it. As you practice strategies of being aware of negative messages, stopping them, replacing them with positive messages, and witnessing the benefits, you will become more skilled and it will come more naturally.

## **Support systems, feelings, and compassion**



There are several things any leader can expect to encounter on their journey. Challenges will occur, unexpected bright spots will emerge, change will happen, people will surprise you, you will surprise yourself, intense feelings will occur, you will be afraid at times, and learning will take place at every turn. I encourage you to show yourself compassion as you grapple with all the joys and challenges of your journey. Let yourself express your feelings in appropriate ways.

The challenges and successes of leadership are best managed through having a support system you can count on. Do you know who is in your corner? Write down on a piece of paper and display names and phone numbers of those who are your biggest fans. You may want to categorize people in your support system by the ways they can uniquely be of support to you. For example, a friend who is an excellent listener, another who is skilled at looking at the big picture, one who has knowledge or experience related to your endeavors, a person who deals well with feelings, etc. Celebrate your successes with people who are supportive of you. Identify your fan club and be in regular contact with each person.

## **Mentors**

Being compassionate with yourself also means that you need not “re-invent the wheel.” There are others who have taken a path similar to yours in the past and you can learn from them based on their own journey. Find a mentor or several mentors. The experience of others may be invaluable to you. Rather than repeating mistakes that others have made, mentors may be able to help you negotiate a smoother path. This is not to say that your path should necessarily look like that of your mentor’s, but that you can learn from your mentor. Your journey needs to be uniquely yours so that the essence of you—your passion and your vision—is in place. However, if you let your mentor(s) share their wisdom you may be able to find a more efficient route.

## **Action Items for Compassion**

As you navigate through your leadership process keep issues of compassion for self and others active in your methods. Seek connection with others, those whom you are leading as well as strangers. As you work with others, engage in the process of self-growth. Identify your personal biases and replace those biases with accurate truths about individuals and groups of people with whom you encounter. Connect with others as individuals rather

than as group stereotypes. Increase your knowledge and work on skills regarding effective leadership that is welcoming of all people. You will not only become a more effective leader but you will also make some exceptional friends and colleagues in the process.

I encourage you to embrace your path of leadership, including your goals and methods of forming your dreams into reality. Practice congruency. Liberate yourself from others' ideas of who you are or what you should be and instead celebrate your uniqueness.

Develop and maintain a support system of people in a variety of areas including mentors, friends, family, and colleagues. Know when you most need which individuals and when those needs emerge, reach out. Effective leaders know that leaning on others from time to time is not only acceptable—it is necessary. Cultivate those relationships through the most challenging and the most enjoyable times. Make a list of these individuals including their contact information. Place this list where you have it with you always. Sometimes just having it with you will be all the support you need. At other times, dialing those numbers will benefit you in immeasurable ways.

Practice an “I can” attitude. Engage in self-affirming talk. Acknowledge the efforts and progress of others as you learn to embrace the lessons inherent in being imperfect. Make peace with knowing we are all works in progress, allowing yourself and others to shine during the journey.

## **PASSION AND COMPASSION MOVING INTO ACTION**

Utilizing the concepts in passion and compassion will naturally move true leaders into action. Making your plans come alive integrates heart and mind through the art and skill of leadership. Your course of action includes the following steps:

### **Passion Into Action, Three-Step Plan**

Once you know what you are passionate about, the true work and the true joy begins. Now it is time to develop your vision. Many people skip this step in developing themselves as leaders and this is the greatest and perhaps the most common mistake. Why? It is through your vision that you make movement toward achieving your goals. For example, if you were interested in running a marathon and you weren't in great shape, you wouldn't just wake up one morning and run twenty-six miles. Instead, you would need to work up to running that distance. In order to run a

marathon you would need a training regimen including everything from types of workouts, to nutrition and rest. This regimen would need a daily, a weekly, and a monthly schedule. The same is true when we have the vision of leadership.

What follows is a three-step plan to help you bring your vision to fruition.

**Step One:** Assessment of where you are now.

An accurate assessment of where you are beginning is invaluable to developing a plan to make your vision a reality. I use the word “accurate” with intention. Many individuals find it difficult to be truly honest about their strengths and areas needing improvement. Such troubles with self-evaluation can lead to ineffective planning. If you don’t know from where you are starting, then creating a strategy to meet your goals is hampered from the beginning.

There are several critical areas you need to be clear about. You need to know your passion and the spectrum of skills, knowledge, and experience related to it. Complete the following sentences:

- a. I am passionate about \_\_\_\_\_.
- b. I know I am skilled at \_\_\_\_\_.
- c. It would be helpful to improve in the areas of \_\_\_\_\_.
- d. The experiences I have had with the following will help me through this process: \_\_\_\_\_.
- e. I need to learn more about \_\_\_\_\_.

**Step Two:** Identification of where you want to be

I encourage you to specifically identify where you are headed. The more specific you can be about where you want to go and what you want to achieve, the easier it will be to create a plan of action that takes you there. For example, a general goal can be seen in a competitive equestrian who states that her goal is to be champion at a horse show. A specific goal for this same person might be to be champion in the three-foot, large junior, hunter division at one of the four horse shows she plans to enter in July. In the latter goal it is much easier to plan specific steps to take in order for the young rider to achieve her goal. She can plan her training to specifically include three-foot high jumps, peaking her performance during the month of July, training under known conditions of the particular shows she is entered, visualizing each of the four competitions, and what the judges at these shows look for in champions.

Completing the following statements will help you determine your ultimate goal:

- a. I will know I have arrived at my destination when \_\_\_\_\_.
- b. In order to achieve my goal I will need to be proficient in \_\_\_\_\_.
- c. I will feel \_\_\_\_\_ about myself when I attain my goal.
- d. My description of what is happening around me when I achieve my goal is \_\_\_\_\_.

### **Step Three: Develop a plan**

Now that you know where you are and where you want to be it is critical to lay out a detailed plan of how you will get from here to there. This plan should be created in a step-by-step format with each step building upon the previous and adding to the next step.

As with many plans, you might need to back up because this plan may need to shift or evolve over time. For example, if a rider falls off her horse and is injured, then she not only needs to “get back on” as the saying goes, but she also needs to adjust her plan to include aspects of building confidence and schedule changes to allow her injury to heal. If you encounter surprises, then some simple alterations to the steps in your plan will help you get back on track. Knowing where you are and what you need to do next in your journey will be invaluable to you as you go through the natural ups and downs of pursuing a dream. A clear plan of action keeps your focus on the present step and makes the process manageable.

In developing your plan you will need:

- a. To know where you are starting
- b. Where you are headed
- c. What tools such as skills, knowledge, experiences, resources, and supplies you need to get there
- d. Written clarification of each mini-goal that helps you get to the macro goal
- e. Steps to take to reach each mini-goal
- f. How you will know when you reach your goal
- g. How you will ensure that you enjoy the process
- h. Formal commitment to the plan

When your plan is written, I encourage you to get feedback from mentors, peers and your support system. Then, make any changes needed. Most importantly, once the plan is created, put it into action!

Clarity around your passion and vision is the first step toward putting this plan into action, and yet we are not, and refuse to be,

alone in creating a better organization, community, and ultimately a better world. Understanding this world, human nature, others of similar and diverse backgrounds and experiences allows our compassion to be the second cornerstone of becoming extraordinary leaders.

## **Compassion into Action—Three-Step Plan**

### **Step One:** Relationship Development

- a. Be interested in others and clearly show your interest.
- b. Show respect and concern for others.
- c. Allow your curiosity to help you navigate interactions.
- d. Identify your biases and work to change them through knowledge, skill, and interaction.
- e. Commit to working through conflicts in relationships.

### **Step Two:** Positive and optimistic orientation

- a. Define what success means to you as a unique individual.
- b. When working with others, determine and agree how success for the group will be measured.
- c. Embrace imperfection in self and others.
- d. Lead with integrity.
- e. Engage in positive self-talk.
- f. Point out others' attributes.
- g. Celebrate progress.

### **Step Three:** Develop and maintain a support system

- a. Write down the names and contact information of people you can lean on for support.
- b. Place your support system list in a place you will always have with you.
- c. Develop a consistent relationship with at least one mentor.
- d. Utilize your support system throughout your leadership process, in easy as well as in challenging times.

## **Passion and Compassion in Action**

Getting started on your action plan demands clear communication with self and others. Effective communication is critical as you express your passion and compassion with others as you approach the goals of the greater good. As noted previously in this chapter, relationships are at the heart of leadership. Any pursuit involves others to varying degrees and always involves self. Therefore, how you communicate with yourself and others has a direct impact on your process.

Communication skills that can be learned include open and

honest communication, conflict resolution, methods of inviting others to share their thoughts and feelings including such techniques as active listening, paraphrasing, open body posture, minimal encouragers, clarifying questions, and follow-up. Implementing these common communication skills is mastered with artful presentation.

The art of communication comes in several forms. The most important of these is that respect and care be included in each interaction. Without respect for others and concern for their well-being, ordinary leadership can be attained. However, if you are reading this book then you are likely looking for ways to be an extraordinary leader. Respect and care for others is worth the effort.

Showing your compassion through honoring the diversity and uniqueness of others will unite individuals and create coalitions of productivity, organizational enhancement, progress, and community. One way you can relay your respect for others is to do your best to understand their thoughts or experiences before seeking to be understood. When you are too quick to impart our own thoughts to others you miss important information and opportunities to connect on a more meaningful level. I encourage you to take a deep breath before reacting, take a step back and focus first on learning more about the situation or person. An easy way to remember this concept is to approach each interaction with curiosity—Inquire.

While employing your plan, know that your intent as a leader may not always have the same impact on others. You must give up the desire to be liked by all people in order to be effective. Leaders are often called upon to make tough decisions that may or may not meet the approval of others. Your intent may be in the best interest of the whole, but the impact felt by individuals may leave them unhappy with your leadership. When faced with tough decisions, make certain you act from a place of integrity rather than one of wanting to win a popularity contest. Empower others while maintaining yourself as a leader.

Putting your leadership awareness, knowledge, and skill into action will reap many rewards. You will feel increased self-regard in the meaningful pursuit of a dream. Impacting the lives of others will bring about various types of fulfillment. Honoring the depths of your greatest desires will make your life feel meaningful. Whatever your dreams are, if you believe in yourself, honor your passion, live with compassion and put your dreams into action, you will feel yourself soar.



## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

A dynamic, inspirational, and interactive speaker, consultant and performance coach, Dr. Mary F. Arnold inspires individuals and groups to live their lives with passion, compassion and action. She has traveled throughout the United States, Canada and even to Thailand providing keynote addresses, workshops and consultations for universities, corporations, high schools and non-profit organizations. She empowers individuals and groups alike to reach beyond the ordinary grasping the extraordinary in themselves and others. From performance coaching with individuals to keynote address with thousands of participants, Dr. Arnold has a unique ability to move people from dreaming to doing. Her vast array of professional and personal experiences as a consultant, performance coach, psychotherapist, public speaker, university instructor, residence hall director, NCAA soccer player and competitive equestrian, inform her unique ability to help others overcome obstacles to attaining their greatest life goals. Dr. Arnold received her masters and educational specialist degrees in counseling from The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and her Ph.D. in counselor education with a specialty in social justice from Oregon State University. Currently she resides in Vermont where you can find her engrossed in her work, cycling, hiking, skiing, snow-shoeing, riding horses or paddling the waters of Lake Champlain.





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# CHAPTER NINE

## The “Hard” Side of Business: Developing People Mike Van Hoozer

*“Our prevailing system of management is killing our people.”*  
—W. Edwards Deming

As Dr. Deming so eloquently and succinctly put it, we cannot continue with the same, ineffective leadership style that has existed for many years in the business community and still persists today. Although it seems like a plethora of new books on leadership are released every day, we are still not putting these new and innovative leadership behaviors into practice. The big ideas are remaining the big ideas gathering dust on bookshelves all over the world leaving people thirsty for just one drop of effective leadership.

I sense there is a classic struggle between good and bad when it comes to the demonstration of leadership. It is portrayed as a dichotomous relationship. The old school of leadership has placed an inordinate amount of importance on the bottom line—the self-proclaimed “hard side of business”—to the detriment of the development of people. The proponents of this style of leadership say that you must focus on the bottom line and grow the business. They equate coaching, counseling, and developing people as soft. In their minds, they do not understand how this so-called “soft side of business” adds to the bottom line and, therefore, totally discount its effect on growing the business.

As I watch this tug-of-war, I am struck with a piercing, reflective question that, in the end helps me sort it out. It is a question that Ralph Waldo Emerson used to pose to his friends as a greeting: “What has become clear to you since we last met?”

What has become clear to me is that we have misnamed these two aspects of leadership. Most people who attend business school and enter the workforce are prepared to handle the business side of the equation. They understand what a balance sheet is. They know how to read an income statement. They even realize that the Internet math of emphasizing market capitalization over profitability doesn’t add up in the end. Based on their training and experiences in school and in business, they are prepared to handle the business side of leadership. It is not the “hard side of business.”

What is hard is the effective leadership and development of

people. The kind of leadership people are truly seeking is not for the faint of heart. One CEO said that leadership would be easy if were not for the people. From what I have seen, waves of people are not standing in line to sign up for this role. They can handle growing the business but have an anxiety attack when it comes to delivering a performance review. I love what Peter Senge had to say in his book *The Fifth Discipline* about the career path of many individuals who ascended to the top based on their individual ability to produce:

“This is new work for most experienced managers, many of whom rose to the top because of their decision-making and problem-solving skills, not their skills in mentoring, coaching, and helping others learn.”

Accenture conducted a survey of 244 executives in six countries spanning more than fifteen industry segments and five distinct functional titles as well as in-depth interviews with executives at twenty additional companies including: American Express, Hewlett-Packard, and Avon. According to this study, the capability that respondents identified as most important to addressing marketplace challenges is developing effective leadership. Approximately two-thirds of executives rated this capability as very important; however, only eight percent said they develop effective leadership very well. In addition, CEOs were asked to identify their most important strategic priorities, and four of the top five were people-related:

1. Attracting and retaining talent
2. Increasing customer service
3. Improving workforce performance
4. Changing leadership and management behaviors
5. Changing organizational culture and improving employee morale

According to this study, as well as my work inside many different types of organizations, the “soft side” of business is finally being acknowledged as a strategic priority. Once acknowledged, the responsibility and opportunity rests with leaders at all levels within these organizations to demonstrate effective leadership.

### **The Absence of Leadership**

“They say absence makes the heart grow fonder, but the absence of leadership has made my heart grow fonder of another organization.” I read the note again in utter disbelief! How could

this person be leaving our company? Why didn't someone step up and provide some leadership? A little bit of coaching would have been nice. Anyone could have done it; yet, nobody did. I wish I had known about this situation sooner. I would have done something. I felt helpless. I had strived to do so much for others within my organization: my counselees, my co-workers, those who worked for me. Yet, I was not involved in the life of this one person.

How do you inspire others to provide true leadership? How do you make those in leadership positions aware of their responsibilities as a leader? How do you get others to see the benefits of mentoring and leading others? All of these are very good questions that demand an answer.

This testimony reflects what many individuals face within their organizations—the lack of true leadership. As much focus that has been put on leadership, you would think that people would have gotten it by now. Yet, many organizations are still a vast wasteland when it comes to finding true leaders. Moreover, many leaders do not get it when it comes to the career development of their people. They simply do not care whether their people succeed or fail.

*“Every great institution is the lengthened shadow of a single man. His character determines the character of the organization.”*

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

I reflected on the note one more time and pondered the timeless truth from Ralph Waldo Emerson. A final question remained and echoed in my mind: Where have all the shadows gone? It seems that too many people have been seared and scorched from the blinding rays of dictatorial wrath or just plain apathy exhibited by their so-called leaders. Clearly, we need more shadows of leadership to provide the proper coverage for the people of today's organizations. Instead, we are more often haunted by the ghosts of leadership past—the command and control leaders who still linger in many areas of society.

I was visiting a client the other day and noticed a portrait of the founder. This scene made me think of the halls of many other company corridors, where pictures and portraits of the founding fathers of the organization are proudly on display. When I see these pictures, I often wonder what kind of people they were during their tenure. Moreover, I question the kind of legacy they left behind. The key question for me as it relates to leadership is: Does the ghost of command and control leadership still haunt the organization and keep it from unleashing the true potential of its

people? Or, does the invisible hand of leadership leave a legitimate legacy for others to imitate and follow.

Emerson's quote applies to the Fortune 500 company as well as the thirty-person non-profit organization. It applies to the global consulting firm as well as the Internet start-up company. It applies to Microsoft as well as the organization of You & Co. It does not apply in the literal sense as in "one man" plays the role of John Wayne and arrives to save the day. The John Wayne archetype of a leader is a thing of the past, for one person cannot know everything. But, in the general sense, Emerson's expression speaks volumes about the role and responsibility of transformational leadership. Leaders, both male and female, have a tremendous responsibility in portraying the right model of leadership. Their shadows pave the way for the rest of the organization to follow.

The shadow of a leader is comprised of both successes and failures. Their followers can benefit from the experience that is gained through the leader's journey through life. The shadow of leadership casts a wide net for others to grow and learn. Even if a follower makes a mistake along the way, the leader is there to direct him back onto the right path and guide his steps.

The problem is that not enough leaders are casting their shadow in order for others to learn. Specifically, leaders are not rising to the occasion and accepting their role to provide guidance, direction, coaching, and counseling. Leaders are not living up to the true definition of leadership. Being a student of leadership, I have heard, read, and taught many definitions of leadership. Kevin Cashman, in his book *Leadership From The Inside Out*, offers the following definition: "Leadership is authentic self-expression that creates value." If you deconstruct this definition, there are three distinct ideas expressed: authenticity, self-expression, and the creation of value. There are many people who are authentic yet do not know how to express themselves and therefore never create any value. Moreover, other people have no trouble expressing themselves, but they may or may not be authentic in their self-expression. Even if the expression is authentic, it may not be done in a manner that is constructive and therefore does not create any value. The three ideas that Cashman advocates must be taken as a whole. A leader must be authentic, know how to express and articulate his or her ideas, and thereby create value.

In the corporate world, it never ceases to amaze me how many stories still exist about command and control leaders terrorizing

the troops of many companies. It seems the more things change, the more they stay the same. I recently attended a leadership development conference in San Francisco where I heard story after story from human resource directors in top corporations about the need for a rebirth of true leadership. They recounted tales about senior executives within their companies who saw no need to grow, learn, or change. What a pathetic state of affairs! The corporate landscape has changed with a legion of bright, energetic, and passionate young leaders entering the workforce every day. These new leaders are ready to make an impact immediately and are committed to lifelong learning; yet old-school leaders who do not see the need to change their ways are stifling their creativity and passion. Before long, these dinosaur leaders will see the error of their ways.

## **A New Way of Thinking**

As Dee Hock, the former CEO of Visa, said: "The problem is never how to get new, innovative thoughts into your mind, but how to get the old ones out."

Leaders need to learn and, in many cases, unlearn/relearn how to lead. Many leaders have not had formal training in how to lead. They have not focused the time on developing the skills necessary to help individuals and teams reach their maximum potential in order for the organization to achieve their mission.

In my experience, I have observed three distinct levels of maturation among individuals within an organization. First, there are those people who are great individual contributors. These people are the ones who can be counted on to get things done. The problem with individual contributors is that their production capability is limited only to themselves. A large number of people remain at this level their entire professional life. I continue to hear stories and testimonies from countless people about leaders of major corporations who have not moved past this stage in their career development. The next level of development is manager. At this stage, people are able to produce individually as well as manage the work efforts of others. A smaller number of people are able to graduate to this level of development. The third and highest stage of development is that of leader. In addition to producing and managing, a person at this level leads through others. Their production capacity continues to expand as they develop those people around them to reach their maximum potential.

## **The Presence of Leadership**

From my research, the hard side of leadership involves seven key roles that are very hard but very rewarding:

- Learning
- Designing
- Coaching
- Counseling
- Mentoring
- Facilitating
- Serving

## **Learning**

“I’m the CEO of my company,” exclaimed a seasoned executive of a company. “I am looked upon for vision and direction. But more than that, I am looked to for the answers.” Do leaders need to have all the answers in order to earn the respect of their employees? Moreover, can a leader have all the answers? A better question still might be: *Should* one leader attempt to provide all the answers? Based on my experience, the answer to these questions is a resounding no! A single leader does not, cannot, and should not have all the answers for the questions that arise in today’s society.

A top CEO of a Fortune 500 company was quoted as saying, “If you’re not confused, you don’t know what’s going on.” The reality is that a single person should not be relied upon as the sole source of knowledge. In today’s fast moving economy, there’s no way one person can keep up with the changes in business strategies, processes, and technologies. Yet, some leaders still resist the urge to seek insight from others. These leaders are afraid to ask for help, because they fear other people will see this as a sign of weakness. Ironically, a passion for learning should be viewed as a sign of great strength. Leaders at all levels of an organization should be confident enough in their abilities that they can be vulnerable enough to ask questions and seek insight from others. Vulnerability in this sense is not a sign of weakness. It demonstrates a willingness to embrace lifetime growth and learning. It means they are open to other viewpoints. It allows them to absorb outside information and infuse it with their own ideas. It indicates that combining a variety of thoughts from several people ultimately helps the organization find the best alternative to a solution and in turn makes them a better leader.

## **Designing**

Many leaders love the limelight. They love getting credit for a job well done. Progression is based on performance, and most people perceive performance to be only the things that are visibly seen. A basketball player executes a play to perfection, and the fans immediately praise him giving little thought to the mastermind behind the play. In this case, the coach designed the play to take advantage of the star's innate ability. Furthermore, the coach recognized the situation including the other team's strengths and weaknesses and called a play to exploit the defense being played. His star player still had to execute, but would he have scored on a poorly designed play? Probably not. The chances for success are extremely higher with a well-designed play.

So it is with leadership. Many leaders don't naturally migrate to the task of design. This task is not openly rewarded, so it is often left by the wayside. Yet, design is an extremely important part of leadership. The leader, like the coach, must design an effective organizational environment in order for his or her followers to thrive. A leader who recognizes the importance of design will produce results now and well into the future.

## **Coaching**

The ability to effectively direct and guide the efforts of others has become somewhat elusive to many leaders. If they are able to overcome their ignorance concerning the importance of mentoring, they stumble their way into coaching. I recently worked with a financial services company where the Director of Human Resources was adamant about "squashing the initiative of several people" just because they were trying to be proactive and innovative about solving a business problem. I have come across other organizations in my tenure where leaders berate the efforts of others thinking this style of coaching will scare them into improving their performance. Coaching by fear and intimidation is childish and should be expelled from every leader's handbook. Fear is the worst motivator; love is the greatest motivator.

The new style of coaching is not really a new style at all. What some call a new style is, in my book, the true definition of what it means to be a coach. Before I give you a definition, let's look at the textbook definition of the word coach. The *American Heritage Dictionary* defines the word coach in this way: *n. One who gives private instruction. v. To train or instruct; teach.*

A coach represents both a noun and a verb at the same time. He or she is a person who gives instruction and guidance and is always focused on the art of coaching. A coach is continually trying



to find new ways to train and instruct his pupils. A coach cares about their growth. A coach listens to their feedback and incorporates it into his or her teaching methods. He or she carefully watches their progress making mental notes along the way about what methods were successful in helping the students develop and reach their potential. A coach incorporates these notes to help him or her become a better coach. All the while, the coach is considering the best interests of the team. He or she is constantly striving to find new ways to build individuals who can work together for the greater good of the team.

Pat Riley, who coached the Los Angeles Lakers to four NBA championships in the 1980s, defines coaching as the ability to “blend the talents and strengths of individuals into a force that becomes greater than the sum of its parts.” In the truest sense of the word a coach possesses the ability to bring out the best in others so that they can accomplish something greater than any one individual would have dreamed of accomplishing by himself or herself. As Pat Riley demonstrated through his own example of effective coaching, he was able to blend some very good talent like Magic Johnson, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, and James Worthy with some overachievers like Kurt Rambis and A. C. Green to create a whole that was greater than the sum of its parts. Coach Riley accomplished this feat, not by constantly berating his players—although I’m sure he may have raised his voice a time or two to make sure they understood his passion and intensity for winning as well as his caring and concern for their development. Instead, Coach Riley focused on what motivated his players and preached a message full of guidance and encouragement.

To provide proper guidance and encouragement, a leader must be willing to provide both positive and constructive feedback. When I mention the word “coaching” in one of my workshops, some people automatically assume I am talking about a fluffy term that relates to only providing positive comments. Believe me, this is not the definition of coaching by any means. While coaching does involve providing positive feedback, it also involves equipping the person with the right kind of instructive advice that will help the person develop into a true leader.

This means a coach must sometimes provide constructive feedback to an individual. Many people often mistakenly refer to this as constructive criticism. Criticism is the act of finding fault with someone or something in an adverse manner. Criticism cannot be constructive in that its whole intent is to tear down. Feedback provides an evaluative response with the intent of

correcting to achieve a better result. The intent of constructive feedback is to build up. The difference is in the words, the tone of voice, the delivery, and the motivation. A narcissistic, command-and-control leader delivers the message and leaves a wake of bodies in his path. A true coach, however, knows how and when to provide feedback in a way that it is heard, received, understood, and incorporated into the other person's life. A true leader delivers feedback in order to help a person achieve his or her maximum potential.

As Ralph Waldo Emerson says, "Trust men and they will be true to you; treat them greatly and they will show themselves great."

Some leaders still rule through fear and intimidation. Other leaders maintain an attitude of "incompetent until proven competent" meaning they subscribe to the "prove me wrong" mentality. These leaders coach from a viewpoint that their followers are incompetent until they prove this theory wrong. Both of these coaching methods do not produce a healthy environment and cannot yield long-term results.

Leaders who demonstrate an inherent belief in their people will instill the most confidence in their people, produce the most constructive environment, and yield exponential, long-term results. This type of leader believes in the talent of the follower and coaches them to accomplish their maximum potential. The leader constantly frames his or her feedback in terms of the follower's "potential to be" while still holding the follower accountable for results. This type of leader represents the true essence of coaching.

## **Counseling**

"Listening. Oh yeah! That's when I'm thinking of what I'm going to say next." Unfortunately, this response is common among many people in leadership positions. For them, listening means a pause in the conversation that allows them to think of their next brilliant piece of advice. These types of leaders prescribe a solution based on their own frame of reference, instead of diagnosing the situation based on the other person's position. Moreover, they think being a good counselor means always providing the right piece of advice. In actuality, a good counselor is first and foremost a good listener. Good counselors communicate their listening skills through their eyes, body language, and their ability to empathically connect with the counselee.

The urge to talk is often like a wave waiting to crash onto a sandy beach. A couple of employees come into your office and say

they want to discuss a problem with you. They begin to describe the situation and before they completely define the problem, you jump in and say, "I know exactly what you are going through, and do I have the perfect solution for you!" Human nature dictates that we solve the problem at hand. This tendency is especially apparent in men. What we often forget is that people want to be heard and understood first. Once a person knows you truly understand him, he is more willing to receive the advice you have to offer. Moreover, you are in a better position to prescribe the right solution, because you have listened to the problem and diagnosed the problem at hand. Many times counseling just involves listening, being a sounding board, and asking the right questions to allow the other person to discern and discover the correct path or choice.

## **Mentoring**

"I don't have time to help him. If he can't figure out how to do it, I guess I'll just do it myself." Unfortunately, I have heard this kind of quote too many times from many a so-called leader. In this fast-paced world with too many tasks to accomplish, mentoring is often the furthest thing from a person's mind. For some people, mentoring is a foreign concept. Other people understand it but don't make it a priority.

Mentoring is the leverage point of leadership. One person can only do so much. A leader's production is dependent upon his or her ability to produce, but it also depends upon his or her ability to lead through others. Mentoring is the craft of developing another person to become a leader, thereby increasing the effectiveness of the individual, the organization, and ultimately the mentor. Many leaders are blind to the correlation of mentoring and their own individual production. Some of them decide erroneously that they must do all of the work. Others take a more narcissistic approach and insist on receiving all of the credit. In the January-February 2000 issue of *Harvard Business Review*, Michael Maccoby discusses the pros and cons of narcissistic leaders. In his article, Maccoby relates five key weaknesses of narcissistic leaders:

- Sensitive to Criticism
- Poor Listeners
- Lack of Empathy
- Distaste for Mentoring
- An Intense Desire to Compete

With many old-school leaders still taking the narcissistic

approach to leadership, it is understandable why they don't see the benefits to mentoring. In fact, they have a "distaste for mentoring" as Maccoby so eloquently states. They abhor it and see no value in it whatsoever. In my experience of observing and teaching about leadership, most leaders who negate the value of mentoring either have never experienced the pleasure of a great mentoring relationship or they are unwilling to credit their own success to a mentoring relationship. The perplexing point for me is how a leader can avoid the promising aspects of mentoring. Even a narcissist would want to produce exponentially beyond his own ability!

Mentoring provides the distinct advantage to produce beyond yourself. When a leader makes it a priority to mentor other people, he can accomplish a lot more. The leader's production capability becomes tremendous, because he can produce through himself as well as through other people. As the leader develops his or her people, they begin to take the initiative to produce. This kind of leader focuses on developing the production capability, or effectiveness, of his or her people. As employees grow and develop into leaders, the organization is stronger and more effective, and the leader has exceeded his or her own production limitations.

## **Facilitating**

In terms of leadership, facilitators are people who guide, direct, and make the paths of others easier based on their experience. Facilitating is the act of guiding, directing, and making it easier for colleagues to succeed and be their best. The problem is that many leaders still don't understand what it truly means to be a facilitator. They think this is a very timid and passive role. On the contrary, a facilitator plays a crucial role in ensuring the right results are accomplished. The key is how to accomplish this feat without becoming too strong of an advocate.

Facilitation is not manipulation. A good facilitator is able to steer people where they want to go and helps guide them along the right path. The key point is that the people make the decisions and choices, not the leader. Leaders use their facilitation skills to help individuals make mutually beneficial decisions that both benefit the individual and the organization.

## **Serving**

The traditional hierarchy within most organizations is a

pyramid where people report to a boss. The boss is responsible for managing and leading the individuals, yet the followers spend most of their time serving and responding to the needs of their boss sometimes to the detriment of their customers. The servant leader inverts this pyramid and becomes responsive to the needs of those he or she serves. If followers need direction, the leader gives it to them. If they need support and encouragement, the leader provides it. If employees need resources to get their job done, the leader acquires the necessary resources. The followers, in turn, become responsible—able to respond to the needs of those they serve such as the customer or their peers.

The role of serving is the most critical role of leadership and is the true leverage point for all the other roles mentioned above. While servant leadership is truly the hardest role of leadership, it can yield the greatest impact on people. By serving the needs of followers, the most effective leaders can design, coach, counsel, mentor and facilitate the successful performance of their followers and their business. Larry Bossidy, the former CEO of Allied Signal, has an excellent quote related to the true evaluation of a servant leader:

*“How am I doing as a leader? The answer is how are the people you lead doing? Do they learn? Do they visit customers? Do they manage conflict? Do they initiate change? Are they growing and getting promoted? You won’t remember when you retire what you did in the first quarter of 1994, or the third. What you’ll remember is how many people you developed. How many people you helped have a better career because of your interest and your dedication to their development...When confused as to how you are doing as a leader, find out how the people you lead are doing. You’ll know the answer.”*

Seek first to serve and all the other things will be added unto to you.

### **Accepting the Challenge—A Call to Action**

In my opinion, there is still a huge leadership void that exists throughout countless organizations. We need to acknowledge the leadership crisis and accept the challenge of addressing the hard side of leadership. My premise is that not enough attention is being placed on the development of talent. True leaders are not stepping up to the plate either because of a lack of the will or due

to a capability deficit in this area. As the great philosopher Yoda said in one of the *Star Wars* movies: “Do or do not. There is no try.”

We are either going to be committed to excellence in the area of leadership or not. There is no middle ground.

Chik-fil-A is a company with leaders who understand the link between people development and bottom line results. This company has had a thirty-seven-year run of consecutive sales gains with 2004 system-wide sales of \$1,746,398,916a 13.8 percent increase over its 2003 figures and a positive 5.2 percent same-store sales increase over the preceding year. The thirty-seven consecutive years of continuous sales growth spans the entire history of the Chick-fil-A chain, which started in 1967. One of their core values involves creating a loyalty effect for their people, which in turn impacts their customers. Truett Cathy, the founder of Chik-fil-A, stated the following regarding this core value:

*“Our people are the cornerstone of all that we do at Chick-fil-A. As a chain, we believe that attracting great people helps create an unforgettable experience for our customers. It requires a lot of time and effort to make sure you have the right people working the right jobs, but we believe this is time well spent. The bottom line is that our people, from our restaurant operators to the team members they hire, enjoy their work.”*

Chik-fil-A has demonstrated incredible business results by focusing on the “hard side of business”—attracting, developing, and retaining awesome talent. What is even more amazing is that they have demonstrated these results while only being open six out of seven days—one day less than most of their competition.

True leadership, in my humble opinion, begins with a true understanding of the human dynamic in the workplace. Leaders who focus on the real “hard side of business” can truly impact the lives of others and therefore have an impact on the bottom line.

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Mike Van Hoozer is a devoted husband, father, consultant, author, coach, and speaker who has dedicated his life to making an impact in the lives of other people. He draws upon over years of consulting experience with every kind of organization from small startup companies to number one on the Fortune 500 list to churches and non-profit organizations. In his work with clients, Mike focuses on helping individuals and organizations reach their maximum potential through workshops, retreats, coaching, and consulting. He has designed and delivered dynamic leadership programs to help individuals and teams discover their leadership voice. In his workshops, Mike blends the worlds of sports, business, and family life to present a compelling vision for what an ideal leader should look like drawing upon his experiences from playing and coaching sports, coaching and counseling hundreds of clients, leading the Board of a non-profit organization, and being the father of boys. Mike is a member of the National Speakers' Association and is sought out as a speaker for organizations and businesses on the topics of leadership, learning, teamwork, passion and purpose, significance, and work/life balance. Mike is the Founder and President of Van Hoozer and Associates, a leadership think tank, and also works with the Total BEST Group helping individuals and organizations pursue the disciplines of Balance, Excellence, Service, and Truth.



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# CHAPTER TEN

## I'm 7 Feet Tall...So Why Can't I Dunk The Ball? The Real Truth Why Some People Will Never Be High Performance Achievers

*Ken Edmondson*

Most people write books primarily for one of three reasons:

1. They want to sell them to become rich and famous.
  1. They are talented and love to write.
2. They have something they really believe in and want to share it with others.

I fit into the third category. As a professional coach and teacher of the science of human performance, the questions I have, more than any others, from the many hundreds of people with whom we have worked over the years sound like this:

"Can I get better?"

"How?"

"When?"

"What do I need to do?"

"Why can't I get better?"

"What's keeping me from achieving more?"

"Is there a magic formula or shortcut to better performance?"

And the one I hear most often is:

"I have always felt I could achieve much more than what I've done so far, but I am just not certain it is possible how can I know?"

It will take you minutes to read this material hopefully you will take the time to do it. It might be the best minutes you spend during the next year.

Why would I make such a statement? Simple if you consider the information, and then act on what you're about to read, it will dramatically impact this year for you and possibly change how you view the balance of your life.

Let me begin by telling you a quick story about a friend from my days in the ninth grade. I'll call him Barry to protect the innocent. Now remember, this was in the mid- and things were considerably different when it comes to athletics, particularly basketball, but try to picture this: we had a ninth grade basketball team that had some wonderful athletes, some of them soon to be future high school and even college stars. In the ninth grade, the number

one and often only attribute for getting noticed by the coach was height. Barry moved to town the summer because his father had taken a new job in my hometown. Word quickly spread about the new guy in town and how he was going to be the next superstar on our basketball team. You see, Barry stood tall the biggest kid I had ever seen the average height on our team at the time might have been 6'0" there was just no way not to notice him. And, of course, we made the observation that anyone that tall had to be a really good basketball player. I mean how could we be wrong? And obviously, the coach noticed Barry and quickly drafted him onto the basketball team but there was no hint of what was about to occur what could go wrong? How could a kid 7'0" tall in the ninth grade *not* be a basketball superstar?

The short version of this story that after months and months of effort on everyone's part, it became obvious that the only way Barry was going to be useful on our basketball team was to have him trot out in pre-game warm-ups, let the other team notice him and hopefully become discouraged by the noticeable height disadvantage, then have him sit politely and curiously at the end of the bench for the entire game. You see while Barry looked like a basketball player, and we wanted him to be a basketball player, and he even had some natural advantages others would have died for Barry had one simple but profound problem he simply could not play, and even more amazing to us was that he didn't really *want* to play. The biggest surprise to us all was that Barry could not even dunk the ball I thought anyone could almost reach the rim flat-footed could surely jump another few inches to dunk the ball.

Our coach clearly wanted him to play, the team needed him to play and his father desperately desired him to play. I am sure there were some things the coach could have taught him, there were some things he could have learned, but the bottom line was, as tall as he was and as much as he looked like a basketball player, he really did not want to do the things it took to achieve that which others was possible.

Barry was first vivid example in life of how easily we can be fooled by the common, but inaccurate truths most people have about human performance. Regardless how it appears on the outside, or what someone tells you, there are other factors that ultimately determine a person's real performance. Little did I know I would eventually think about and refer to Barry my professional career. Turn out Barry had a keen interest in woodworking and eventually became a tall carpenter but it was a

better use of his talents and skills, and most importantly, something he was truly excited about doing, so I am certain he succeeded.

Looking back, Barry was my introduction to the fact that when it comes to achieving maximum performance, there are two categories of people:

1. **Those who do!**
2. **Those who don't!**

Obvious, isn't it but did you ever wonder why? Did you ever wonder if people in the second category could move into the first? Have you ever thought those in the first category are just the lucky people, or maybe they are special in some way or more talented than those in the second? Which category are you in? What causes people to be in one or the other? There are answers to these questions and we will reveal those on the following pages.

The science of maximizing human performance potential has been a topic of keen interest for most of the entire time man has existed on the planet. During the last years, the scientific study, technique and measurement of human performance potential have made major advancements. We reflect our fascination about it by constantly keeping visible reminders of great human performance. We describe, compare, televise, celebrate, even create museums, and keep extensive records in every area of life where important human performance and achievement can be measured. We keep carefully detailed records in areas of business, sports, education and science. The fastest, tallest, most points scored, most home runs, the size of companies by revenue or employee count, the highest income earners, the wealthiest people, the smartest people books fill our shelves about super achievements in every competitive venue that fascinates us, it's fun, it's entertaining and it's everywhere. We love to measure and celebrate the highest achievement of human performance. We love our heroes who achieve greatness in every walk of life.

We are taught early in our life and reminded often along the way that high achievement, maximum performance and aggressive goals are all essential to our personal well-being. The world seems to discount, avoid, and even in some cases pity those individuals who, in opinion, are low in ambition, desire, motivation and commitment. Could anyone *not* want to reach their potential, get better, improve, make more money, achieve greatness, set new records, reach the top, get ahead in life and beat the record? Let's do better than last year, let's beat our competition, let's get ahead of our neighbor, let's do more than

they expected! After all, wasn't this country built on the Protestant work ethic, "*God helps those help themselves?*" Our motto has become, "*The successful person does things, and the unsuccessful person has things done to them.*" seek independence and set own goals the self-esteem, inner excitement and knowledge to know that plans can be followed.

So why is it with all the emphasis and importance we place on performance and achievement that so many people simply will not do the things allow them to achieve greater levels of success? It's rare to find someone who will actually admit, "No thanks, I really don't want to do better, I just prefer to be safe and comfortable, that's enough for me. I'll take no risk, just let me stay in my comfort zone!" Research reflects that as many as of people actually fit into this category surprised? It's almost un-American to admit that you don't want to do better, that you are not willing to do what it takes to achieve your greatest potential. Lee Thayer said in his book, *Leadership*, "Words are words, explanations are explanations, promises are promises, but only performance is reality." Performance results in most people's lives tell a different story. My experience as a performance coach has shown me the majority of people only want to achieve the highest degree of security and comfort that will satisfy those around them and create the least amount of fear for themselves

There are two key issues that determine how people will ultimately achieve and at what level. The first is **Fear**, and the second is what we call your **GO Factor**.

Fear is one of the two greatest drivers of how people determine their therefore, it is the first issue we must understand about what causes a majority of people to stay in category two Denis Waitley, one of the earliest and most effective teachers on human performance stated in his book, *Seeds of Greatness*, "Fear is defined as false education appearing real." have determined there is some obstacle that limits ability to go further, to achieve more whether it is actually real or not, it has become real to . Fear defines the floor and the ceiling of how set goals in life, how determine level of performance and, therefore, the ultimate level of achievement are comfortable pursuing. Fear keeps above minimum level of performance, in safe zone, above the level that is unacceptable but fear also establishes a ceiling on potential. It keeps from going above comfort zone and reaching maximum potential There is one absolute fact of which you can be certain about people who reach their maximum potential: along the way they have made some courageous decisions, they have overcome

their fear. There are three types of fear that strangle people beyond the fear of death—the greatest fear among nonspiritual individuals:

**Fear of Rejection**—the fear of being a fool, embarrassed in the sight of

presence of others (A Floor Fear)

**Fear of Failure (Change)**—the fear of charting unknown waters, being first,

breaking tradition, sacrificing external security, getting out of our comfort

zone. (A Floor Fear)

**Fear of Success** is an actual expression of guilt associated with our natural

desire for self-gratification: “I don’t see myself being capable of achieving

more.” (A Ceiling Fear)

In performance coaching, helping people to get to the root of their fear—their limiting beliefs—is the key to unlocking greatness within them. This material is not intended to address those fears and how to unlock them, but since fear is such a universal negative motivator that either compels or inhibits greatest potential, it is important to realize that many of fears which limit a person’s potential for higher performance stem from taping (programming) in early childhood by parents and others who were

This is not intended to be a criticism of parents; I *am* one. My wife and I tried to do the best we could with our three daughters, so I understand the challenges and wish I had known and understood all of the following information when our kids were young

Let me give you some examples of how become taped in the early years of life. Taping is the process of programming or conditioning a person to respond to the presentation of certain stimuli—it is the work of what we call our auto-response mechanism. When presented with situations, conditions or comments from others, we simply respond automatically as a result of our taping. A very basic example is a conversation we might have with an associate or friend. They say “ello,” we reply, “ello”—it’s automatic we don’t have to analyze this transaction. But it doesn’t stop there—it continues with every piece of information or situation presented to us. Our brain (computer) is taped (programmed) to respond to everything that happens to us; we

don't analyze, we just respond.

Our fears (emotions) are also taped into us. We automatically project certain fears into almost every situation or conversation based on how we have been taped. For example, one of the first words we learn at an early age is "No." We are reminded regularly what will happen if we try something new, take a risk or break the rules. The seeds (emotions) for the fear of rejection, the fear of failure, and eventually the fear of success are planted and watered constantly in us as children, then reinforced as we get older not only our parents, our teachers and others we see as authority figures in childhood. We are reminded what will happen if we mess up. We are told, "Do the right thing" "Now be a good boy or girl" "Bad boy, you will be punished for that" "You know what will happen if you don't pass that test" "Don't disappoint us." On and on it goes until we are completely taped and have built a solid floor for pleasing others and never take a risk that would potentially cause us to achieve at a level higher than our self-perception. This taping plays a dramatic role in how we respond to the challenges of achieving greater performance and going to higher levels as adults. It feels like risk to us and looks like potential failure therefore, without realizing it we are hearing tapes from our early childhood that cause us to be cautious and risk adverse.

Michael Dell, the founder of Dell Computers, said the most valuable gift his parents gave him as a child was the right to fail, the right to try new things, the right to take risks. He was taped to believe that failure was not a negative. It was all in how you looked at it and he considered failure as only a way to discover how not to do something. It was exciting to try and take the risk because he had been taped to believe he could do anything he could visualize in his mind and was willing to set goals to achieve. Oprah Winfrey talks often about how her grandmother told her constantly as a child, "You can do anything, nothing can stop you try and keep trying until you've found a way to do it you are going to be great! How different were we taped from Michael Dell or Oprah Winfrey?

The fear of success is an interesting one. It is really the fear of trying. You will recognize its manifestation in people when you see them procrastinate and rationalize. These are what I call the bookends that hold people's fears neatly and carefully together and in place. It sounds like this, "I can't imagine myself that successful" "I can see it for you, but not for me" "I am going to do

it, but not until I get a few other things done” “You know I’ve tried, but given my circumstances, I think I’ve done as well as I can do” and so the pattern continues unbroken for many people all of their lives.

So, when you consider how most people are taped in their early years, it’s no surprise research has shown that a majority of people really don’t want to do better, they really only want to achieve a certain level of comfort and don’t want to spend the time or energy to go to the next step he ones say, “Well, I might not be the best, I not have gotten to the very top, but at least I am better than all those below me! Oh, they claim they want to achieve more, they think about it from time to time especially when their current comfort level is threatened but for the most part the majority of people simply have a target comfort level they want to achieve and once having arrived at that point, they will do only what is necessary to remain there in fact, they will often defend this position in their own mind by saying, “People are always trying to improve and get further ahead are not my kind of people, they are greedy, they are the ones step on others to get what they want sure it would be nice to win the lottery, but if that doesn’t happen, I’ve done pretty darn well if you consider all I had to overcome along the way!” Sound familiar? ope not.

I must confess, early in my career when I struggled with the fear that I would fail (there’s that word again), I would even get angry at people who talked about higher achievement, or motivation, or the power of winning; you know, those people are always telling you that you can do more if you choose. How they be so sure? If they my situation, or my background they might not feel that way. What gives them the right to suggest to me what real success is anyway besides, they most likely had a lot of luck to get where they are today.

Yep, I fought those demons as well, and they are tough ones, but over time I began to study, read, realize and apply many of the things I now write about began to see a change in my life how I thought about and measured my own sense of potential and achievement I was able to get to the root of my fear and look at the possibility that if I really wanted to do more, *I could do it*. There was a way a formula a plan I could actually follow! I knew the drive was there, but the “fear of failure” and even “fear of success” were winning the battle against “desire to try.” I began to study and research the differences between people looked and talked about achieving at a higher level and those actually *did something* to get there!

If you have read this far, it is my hope you might be one of those people who fit into that minority group who hear a constant nagging voice in your head which sounds like this, "I've got to do better" "I know I can do more" "I'm better than this," and you wrestle with the inner struggle that you want to do better but don't know exactly how. Perhaps you have already achieved what some would consider success, you even look successful, others admire your position, but you believe you maximum potential.

Many people think and feel this way daily they want to achieve more, they want to get better, they want to see what is over the next mountain here is a real inner drive constantly pushing them harder but they are faced with the reality that they don't exactly know what to do next or what is actually keeping them from achieving more they are thankful for what they have achieved, but there is an excitement to achieve more, and yet there is an equally large frustration that seems to be holding them back from going faster and higher. If that is the case, consider it a great thing, even a blessing, because you are in a group who has what it takes to make the first step to maximizing your potential you are in a rare group indeed.

There is help a way to reach that potential, a way to go faster a way that takes a little knowledge, a little hard work and a great deal of persistence You simply need to address your fear, set a plan you can follow which we will give you in this material and you are on your way

here are two categories of people when it comes to this matter of actual achievement those want it and will do the necessary things to get it and those simply are conditional achievers once they have arrived at the position where they are comfortable in their fear, they will not go higher regardless of what they say or tell others they want to do In all of my years of coaching and teaching people to achieve more, there is a similar message all people seem to echo but not everyone means it it sounds like this when we talk:

***"I have done well, but I've never felt like I've reached my full potential."***

***"I am not satisfied with what I have achieved."***

***"I am frustrated that I cannot ever seem to get over the bar that I've set."***

***"Every year I say this is going to be my best year ever, but it never happens."***

***"It seems I always reach my goal just to realize it doesn't completely***



**satisfy.”**

*Charlie Brown said it best to Lucy, “My greatest burden in life is potential.”*

How do you know if really mean it or are just giving lip service because it sounds good? Is it just a way to prevent scaring themselves? Are they lying to themselves just to help them think they really are going to do better? In addition to fear which restricts so many people from overachieving, there is a second and very important factor in determining why people are willing or not willing to set higher goals to achieve their maximum potential. It is another issue we must also understand if we are to fully appreciate the uniqueness of human performance potential.

There are certain constructs (conditions) in each of us that the study of human performance has determined as a result of our DNA. It's a nature issue we were born with it! These constructs are often described using words like desire, commitment, motivation, attitude. While all of those make up what causes some people to be overachievers and others to miss the mark, there is a term I use to summarize *all* of those constructs embodied into one. This term best describes this measurement of human performance potential in each of us: a measure of pure ambition. Dr. Larry Craft described it as our **GOAL ORIENTATION FACTOR** or our **“GO Factor”**. It captures desire, commitment, ambition and motivation into one term. You are born with a certain GO Factor and through your taping, you begin to develop and live out your life script! And it is darn hard to change in fact, without really wanting to change it without really working hard to change it so much of how you see and seek achievement is already determined for you largely by the time you are an adolescent. For those who have a high GO Factor, it is simply a matter of finding the right formula and acting on it persistently. Not a lot of work, just persistence. For those with a low GO Factor, it can be changed but it takes considerably more effort, energy and persistence. Herefore often unachievable for most without professional coaching.

Your GO Factor can range from complacent to never satisfied. The two most significant constructs make up your GO Factor are desire and commitment. Desire is the most important element for determining whether or not an individual has potential for growth and achievement. It is extremely difficult to motivate people who either lack desire or no longer have the desire necessary for achievement. When committed but lack desire means that “bar”

or "GO Factor" is lower than who superachiever or overachiever. are committed to reaching their goals, but their goals are not as grand as someone else's. In some cases, they might have goals but th might be less than the goals earlier in their careerthey might have already achieved to the highest level of their GO Factor and now their goal is just to maintain the status quobe safe and comfortable.

Often people cannot go above their GO Factor because they have a lower self-esteem limits how they see themselves; it is that fear of success we discussed earlier. How we see ourselves in our own minds has everything to do with how we will act out our GO Factor. Many people simply do not see themselves being able to achieve at a higher level

**People will always act according to their GO Factor, regardless of what they tell you they want to accomplish!**

Commitment is the other critical construct makes up your GO Factort is the full, unconditional means of doing whatever it takes to succeedno matter what! In business people believe their commitment is quite strong because their commitment to their company, their customers, their employees, and their families is strong.The problem they discover most of the time is one of conditional commitment. This means they are committedbut only as long as it is not too difficult or scary, without any discomfort or disagreement in principle with what they believe they must do.

Again, goals come into the picture. Sometimes lack of commitment is a problem because people do not have anything to which they can commitno clear goals. They do not have great personal goals that actually motivate them enough to make a strong commitment.

It has long been observed that the highest personal achievers are master goalsetters.is the road map for individuals with a high GO Factor to harness their talent, passion, values and destiny to achieve their greatest potential is an essential part of the formula in helping to raise someone's GO Factor when it is naturally low.People with a low GO Factor are what we call "goal satisfied" versus "goal motivated" for those with a high GO Factor.

Goal satisfied means that once achieved a desired level of comforta certain level of satisfactionthey will not do the necessary things to continue to raise their achievement to higher level. goal motivated an internal combustion system that is never satisfied. They want to achieve more and more. They want to see how far they can go, how high they can reach, how fast they can run. In some cases, they have special talents and strengths, but

because of their GO Factor they have trained and conditioned those talents and strengths to reach their highest potential.

Simply put, people with a low to even moderate GO Factor have little interest in achieving at a higher level than that which is simply enough to satisfy their safest needs and to stay consistent with the expectations of those around them. a nice home, comfortable job, good income, even a comfortable retirement nest egg. It appears to their friends and family that they are "successful" but they don't want to achieve at their highest potential, in other words they might be feet tall but they just cannot dunk the ball, and frankly are not interested in doing what it takes to make it happen.

It is very difficult to determine someone's GO Factor simply by looking at iscurrent status an exampleusing business againit is much like attempting to decide who is your best salesperson. You don't know if your top producers got there because they are the best or because they happened to be in the right place at the right timeOne sure way you can determine a high GO Factor in people is to look at their consistency. Have they done it year after year, after year, after year under different circumstances and conditions, overcoming the highs and lows that confront us all?

After years of observing people and listening to those with a high GO Factor and those with a low GO Factor, I agree with the conclusion that Eric Hoffer offered in his book, *The True Believer*

*"THE CONSERVATISM AMONG THE LOW AND MODERATE ACHIEVERS IS JUST AS RIGID AND UNCHANGING AS THE CONSERVATISM AND RIGIDITY OF THE HIGH ACHIEVERS AND THE RICH."*

There are three ways to determine GO Factor:

1. Watch life over a period of years consistency will reveal it; remember, results are results.
2. Test themthrough the use of highly validated assessments.
3. Look at goalsboth personal and professional.

Of these three, the first two only measure or reveal GO Factoretting goals can actually change or increase GO Factor. The fact is that people with low to moderate GO Factors just will not do it over time consistently.It is an inescapable fact that people with the highest GO Factor are master goalsetters. They are unyielding. It's a science to them. They are committed. They are dedicated. They are goal motivated, not goal satisfied. It becomes

the road map to get them where they want to go.

If you believe you are tall, you have a high GO Factor and want to learn to dunk the ball you want to be a high achiever let me give you what we believe are the most essential elements to pursue:

1. **Hire a Professional Performance Coach** coach who really understands the dynamics of how to help you become more effective, and understands the critical skill of helping you revise those tapes that are not working for you.
2. **Learn to Set Personal Goals** This material is not about the topic of goal setting but there are four internal energy sources which must be in alignment before you can set goals in the four most important areas of your life. Understanding how the human mind focuses on goals and the advantage of setting goals in week increments is a powerful event.
3. **Build a Support Group** The people with whom you associate today, you will resemble in five years. Find a mentor(s) develop a support group who can guide and encourage you.
4. **See Your Challenges in a Different Light** Your future could be determined by some conversation you are having with yourself in the present about what you could or should have done, or what did or did not happen. The difficulty arises when you don't understand the language in your own head.

**Use the Knowledge You Already Have** You have a unique link between what you know and what you do make it possible for you to perform as you want or desire, rather than as you are compelled to do. It is not so much about changing you as it is about giving you the tools to see what you are doing and determine why you do what you do so you can choose to act differently.

If you wish to pursue what you've read, please contact us, we will be delighted to discuss our ideas, give you more resource material or recommend a qualified performance coach in your area with whom you can begin to work.

My hope is that this information is helpful to you and encourages you to consider and re-evaluate your own GO Factor and whatever fear might be limiting you. If your GO Factor is high, then setting goals will make you more powerful; if it is low, then setting goals will change it and cause it to begin increasing

My best to you on your journey.

*"If you want to say yes to success, you have to also say no to those things that get in the way of yourself. Shad Helmstetter*

**Resources:**

*Quick Start Leadership*, Larry L. Craft

*Seeds of Greatness*, Denis Waitley

*The Strangest Secret*, Earl Nightingale, CD, Career Track Pub., Audio Cassette edition, 1988.

*The True Believer*, Eric Hoffer

*Think and Grow Rich*, Napoleon Hill

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ken Edmundson is founder, Chairman and CEO of the Edmundson Northstar Companies, parent company of Edmundson Northstar Training Institute, Edmundson Northstar Employee Assessment Institute and Edmundson Northstar Knowledge Institute. The firm is a recognized expert in training executional leadership, sales and sales management and customized employee assessment for companies across a multitude of industries. Ken is also President and Managing Partner of Sparks-Edmundson Business Investment Group, a private investment partnership with interests past and present, in real estate, the marina industry, aviation, financial services and the Internet sector. Ken began his career in 1975 with Martin Industries, Inc. of Alabama, a large privately held manufacturing firm with sales throughout the U.S. and Canada. At the age of 25, he assumed the responsibility as National Sales Manager and Product Director of a division with a 100-man sales force. Ken's success in building large, service-driven, employee-motivated companies has led to his recognition as a prominent speaker, teacher and trainer on the subjects of "The Complete and Effective Salesperson," "The Honorable Way to Sell" and "The Perfect Employee." In 1992, Ken was recognized by **Memphis** magazine as one of the top 100 Memphis business leaders who are contributing to the city and its growth. Ken and his wife, Debbie, have been married for 32 years and are the parents of three girls. They work together in teaching and mentoring young married couples.



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